Philosophy, Rhetoric, and Sophistry in the High Roman Empire

Maximus of Tyre and Twelve Other Intellectuals

Jeroen Lauwers

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By

Jeroen Lauwers

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Introduction

Is Maximus of Tyre, the Imperial Greek author of 41 orations about philosophical topics, to be regarded as a philosopher, a rhetor, or a sophist? This is the primary question regarding which the author of this study undertook his doctoral project, of which this book is the final result. It is, all in all, a straightforward question, but the answer proves to be a lot more complicated, as the main scholarly judgements about the Tyrian so far tend to be more indicative of these scholars' own interpretative assumptions than of the dynamic intellectual background of Imperial literature and philosophy. By means of a detailed study of Maximus' *dialexeis* and important concurrent voices, this book proposes to resolve this scholarly problem in a fashion that is more historically accurate.

For our answers, Maximus' life and career are sources of information upon which we can hardly rely. Unlike many rhetoricians and philosophers from the period of the so-called 'Second Sophistic', Maximus of Tyre, the historical author of the *dialexeis*, is almost entirely unknown to us. Moreover, as a result of the uncertainty about the adequateness of our sources, most elements of the little information that we do possess can be doubted as well. Consequently, the status of Maximus' own autobiographical accounts, which are already not very numerous to begin with, is often hard to verify.

A first problem arises when we confront the data of our two most important sources, viz. the *Chronicle* of Eusebius of Caesarea and the *Suda*.[1] According to the former, Maximus of Tyre 'came to prominence' around the 232nd Olympiad, which corresponds to the period of 149 to 153 AD. This would imply that Maximus' *floruit* was, or at least started, during the reign of Antoninus Pius (138–161). However, scholarly research has evidenced that Eusebius' account is probably fallacious.[2] The *Suda*, on the other hand, which took its information from the *Onomatologos* of Hesychius, situates Maximus a couple of decades

1 *Suda*, s.v. Μάξιμος, Τύριος.

2 Eusebius' sources do not give any impression of being historically accurate. Jerome's version pairs Maximus with Arrian, who comes much earlier. Syncellus confuses Maximus Tyrius with the proconsul of Africa Claudius Maximus, who functioned as a judge in the trial of Apuleius' *Apology*. The Armenian translation makes both mistakes together, suggesting moreover that Maximus (together with Arrian) was a teacher of Marcus Aurelius. We can strongly doubt, therefore, whether Eusebius' account itself was unambiguously correct. See Trapp (1997a), xii n. 4.

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later, under the reign of Commodus (180–192). There is no real reason to question this date, even though there is no decisive evidence to support it.

Some scholars[3] have tried to identify Maximus of Tyre as Cassius Maximus, the addressee of Artemidorus' *Oneirocriticon*, and this identification appears rather seductive, since Artemidorus depicts his addressee as a writer,[4] a Phoenician,[5] and the wisest of all men.[6] Nevertheless, this argumentation is not particularly cogent. Moreover, this would almost necessarily imply that Maximus was recognized and honoured in his time as a talented philosopher, a conclusion which, even though it corresponds to Maximus' educated self-promotion in his speeches, cannot simply be taken for granted.

Evidence based on Maximus' name remains disappointing as well, for it does not necessarily point to Roman citizenship or special privileges, as the adoption of a Roman name had become a rather frequent custom among Greek aristocrats. Furthermore, Maximus seems to have been one of the more popular Roman names both in Rome and in Greece.[7] His toponym Tyrius does not lead to decisive conclusions either. For sure, it has something to do with Tyre (nowadays Sur), an important city in modern Lebanon,[8] but we cannot be certain as to whether Maximus was born and had lived there, whether he had only studied there, or whether he had any other connection to the city.[9] In any case, he does not appear to feel the urge to boast frequently about his home city, at least not in the same self-conscious way as a Dio Chrysostom or an Aelius Aristides.[10]

Perhaps this lack of chauvinism is caused by the addressees of Maximus' *dialexeis*. For if we are to believe the *Suda* and the title of the *Codex Parisinus Graecus* 1962, Maximus' extant texts are written recordings of speeches performed during his first visit to Rome. This setting seems far from implausible, for in his first introductory oration, Maximus himself alludes to the fame

3 E.g., Pack (1963), xxv–xxvi; Puiggali (1983), 11–12; Szarmach (1985), 5; Bowersock (2004), 56. For others, see the recent overview in Harris-McCoy (2011), 423–424 n. 1.

4 Art. *On*. 2.proem.

5 Art. *On*. 3.66.

6 Art. *On*. 2.70.

7 Trapp (1997a), xii; for a more general discussion, see Solin (2001).

8 On the importance of Tyre in the history of the Roman East, see, e.g., Millar (1993), 285–295.

9 Unlike other sophists discussed in Avotins (1975), it has as yet been impossible to link Maximus to any sort of institution like the chair of rhetoric or philosophy in a certain city.

10 Batty (2002) thinks differently about these matters, but, to my mind, Maximus does not talk more vigorously about 'his' Tyrian harbours than about any other 'Greek' subject that has nothing to do with Tyre whatsoever.

he has amply acquired by means of his previous performances.[11] This suggests that Maximus, like many intellectuals of his times,[12] travelled around the great Mediterranean cities, where he was much respected and asked to provide moral teaching and entertainment. And even if his immodest remarks are not true, it still presupposes an audience of people who were unable to verify whether all this was a sincere report of his fame; as a result, the fact that he can make such claims in front of his listeners renders Maximus' existence as a travelling virtuoso more credible and acceptable.

Moreover, in his *dialexeis*, Maximus claims to have visited Arabia and Phrygia and to have seen the streams Meander and Marsyas.[13] These accounts are hard to confirm, however, because they are not only unsupported by actual evidence, but they also have an additional advantage for the speaker, in that his authority might be taken more seriously as a result of this statement of *autopsia*.[14]

Scholarly Reception

Since there is hardly any clue of the historical Maximus, many scholars have relied on his literary works for a consistent interpretation. Studies of this kind have primarily focused on the value of the *dialexeis* for the reconstruction of the history of philosophy. From this angle, the appreciation is in general rather negative.[15] In scholarly publications, especially the less recent ones, Maximus is often seen as a minor philosophical speaker, not particularly important in the history of ancient Greek philosophy.[16] His texts tend to be viewed as dull,

11 Max. *Or.* 1.6.

12 Travelling around and delivering speeches is acknowledged to be a common practice among the sophists of the Second Sophistic, as is amply evidenced in Philostratus' *Lives of the sophists*. However, this practice was not only limited to the great orators; Plutarch, to name but one, is also known to have made visits to Rome.

13 Max. *Or.* 8.8.

14 Puiggali (1983), 12, *bis*.

15 This negative response has been a common reaction to Second Sophistic literature, and for various reasons. Goldhill (2002), esp. 60–107, offers a good illustration of this by focusing on the complex reception of Lucian (in which Goldhill himself deliberately chooses to take part, in that he tries to revitalize the study of Lucian with regard to the identity issues which are raised by the latter's texts).

16 For the many rather negative comments on Maximus' literature and especially on his philosophy (often in studies not directly devoted to him), see, e.g., Boulanger (1923), 49;

unoriginal, and repetitive. There are three assumptions proper to most scholars in this research field which have biased the perception of Maximus, and which can consequently be taken as responsible for this negative appreciation.

First, there is a point to be considered which is almost too obvious to be mentioned here, but which nonetheless proves very relevant in this respect: the gap between the ancient and modern times has created a large distance between the ancient and our contemporary appreciation of innovativeness.[17] A post-Romantic idea such as the preference of originality over reproduction[18] cannot simply be transposed to the classical world. Maximus' oeuvre provides us with the opportunity to surmount our own culturally defined assumptions and to conduct an unprejudiced investigation into the social position of philosophy in the Roman Empire.

Secondly, modern scholars of ancient texts often adopt the gaze of the 'expert', in that they tend to be on the lookout for texts with more sophisticated knowledge of the subject and a more critical attitude than the original model audience. The scholarly predilection for technical, deliberated texts from the ancient Greeks leaves authors like Maximus largely in the dark. If we want to interpret Maximus' literary activity in its proper social framework, however, we also need to turn to the response, the concerns, and the expectations of the model audience of the *dialexeis*, an audience that probably cherished values different from those of modern academia.

Thirdly and closely related to the previous remark, by regarding Maximus' oeuvre almost solely as a source for the reconstruction of (Middle-Platonic) philosophy, a serious amount of his literary and communicational effort remains underexposed. And yet this underexposure has exactly been the *dialexeis*' faith, as many classical scholars prevailingly focused on the (rather banal) philosophical ideas proclaimed in them, and not on the functional rhetorical way in which Maximus puts them to the fore.[19] The same 'philosophical' gaze is responsible for the fact that Maximus has very often been read for his content, and not for his style. Of course, this mode of reading is rooted in

Tate (1946); Perry (1955), 297; van Groningen (1965), 50; Reardon (1971), 199–205. See also, more generally on the literature of the Imperial period, Brunt (1994) and Flinterman (1996).

17 A good example of this view on canon and avant-garde literature are some of the twentieth-century Russian Formalists. See, for a representative of this movement, Tynjanov (1971).

18 Cf. Bompaire (1958), 5.

19 The early studies that illustrate this most clearly are Rohdich (1879) and Soury (1942).

the human habit to focus on the ideas of a text rather than on the way in which these ideas are articulated, but this does not make the latter approach less relevant.

It thus becomes clear that the negative assessment of Maximus' work may have just as much (if not more) to do with scholarly prejudices as with the text itself. A historicist approach may not lead to an overall revaluation of these orations, but it may at least focus on a potential audience in the Roman Empire to which Maximus' type of philosophizing must have appealed. Already back in 1911, Hermann Hobein published an enlightening article about the Tyrian's '*Philosophie des Salons*',[20] but it is only later, with the renewed interest in Imperial Greek literature, that some scholars have really started to pay attention to the Tyrian in his own right. Two influential articles by George Leonidas Koniaris focused on some important questions, such as internal coherence of the text and the authorial persona, but Koniaris still seems to situate himself within the camp of the previous generation of scholars who make a reasonably derogatory judgement of Maximus.[21] The same can be said about the extensive philosophical study by Jacques Puiggali,[22] and about the monograph about Maximus by Marian Szarmach, who tends to situate the Tyrian more in a rhetorical context, only to repeat previous judgements about the topical and unoriginal character of the *dialexeis*.[23]

The most substantial attempt at revaluing Maximus as a source for Imperial philosophy can be found in the studies by Michael Trapp. Not only did Trapp deliver an edition and a translation of the *dialexeis*,[24] he also actively refutes previous unfavourable judgements about Maximus, and shows how the Tyrian may in fact be an important source for the reconstruction of *Imperial*

20 See Hobein (1911), 206–207.

21 See Koniaris (1982) and (1983).

22 See Puiggali (1983). In his search for Maximus' Platonism, Puiggali does not seem to take enough into account the eclecticism of this period. For the richness of philosophical doctrines combined under the header of Middle-Platonism, see Zeller (1963), 220–221, and Trapp (1997b), 1948. See also more generally Whittaker (1987), and Dillon (1977), xv. Dillon's book illustrates the rich variety of dogmas among the leading Platonist philosophers, the result of which is also reflected in Maximus' speeches. Before the publication of his doctoral dissertation, Puiggali also wrote two rather vague articles about the link between Favorinus and Maximus and between Dio and Maximus. See resp. Puiggali (1980) and (1982).

23 See Szarmach (1985). See also his rather one-sided view on Maximus' definition of philosophy in Szarmach (1983).

24 See resp. Trapp (1994) and (1997a).

philosophy, which, as we will demonstrate later, tends to be more tolerant of the reproduction of traditional knowledge than modern academia.[25]

Inspired by Trapp's fairly recent undertakings, this study proposes to follow a similar historicist approach. While previous scholarly work often starts from an anachronistic and monolithic understanding of proper (ancient) philosophy, this book will show that Maximus' rhetorical handling of philosophy is not without its parallels in Imperial philosophy and literature, and that his case should thus urge modern interpreters to abandon their own prejudices and focus on the dynamic historical reality that forms the background of Maximus' communication with his contemporary audience.

From the Collective to the Individual

As we just indicated, the historiography of philosophy misses out on important chapters if it only pays attention to the monolithic body of ideas that have resulted from philosophical deliberations. Another important point concerns the way in which philosophical messages time and again come to be legitimized in a concrete communicational context, for this perspective shows under which circumstances these ideas have been repeated, appropriated, and authorized by individual authors.

This study's care for such a contextualizing perspective can generally be described as a paradigm switch from the collective to the individual. Indeed, behind every single one of our sources of the Imperial period, there are concrete human beings who try to communicate a sensible and coherent message to their audience. The result is a lively culture where many different definitions of philosophy, sophistry, and rhetoric were operative and engaged in an energetic struggle for cultural and philosophical legitimacy. Many Imperial intellectuals benefit from such an approach, as it makes modern interpreters aware of their dynamic responses to the strongly polemical antagonistics of their day. Especially for Maximus of Tyre, whose status as a 'proper' philosopher, as we have seen, tends to be discarded by many modern scholars, an individualizing account is more than welcome.

The individualizing paradigm may not solely correct some anachronistic assumptions proper to the historiography of philosophy, but also rectifies other scholarly interpretations of Maximus from a literary and 'sophistic' angle. In this field of research, the adoption of sociological theories has reinvigorated the

25 See Trapp (1997a), xi–lv; Trapp (1997b); Trapp (2007a); and Trapp (2007b).

study of Imperial literature, but it also brings with it its own blind spots. For reasons of focus and clarity, it is worthwhile to engage in a dialogue with the discussion of Maximus in Thomas Schmitz' lucid and influential study of the Second Sophistic in *Bildung und Macht* (1997),[26] and to demonstrate how his methodological framework may have caused him to miss out on a possible additional reading of Maximus that could lead to an overall re-evaluation of his orations in the light of the poetics and social dynamics of Imperial oratory and philosophy.

Concretely, Schmitz' reading of Maximus as a mere reproducer of the cultural value scales of his era logically follows from the methodological framework which he sets out from the beginning, viz. a Bourdieuian reading of the Second Sophistic as a notable factor in the stabilization of power in the hands of the elite citizens of the Roman Empire. Inspired not only by Pierre Bourdieu, but also by Michel Foucault, Schmitz uses Maximus' example to show how the need for a stable negotiation of power via cultural learning brings about an interiorized tendency towards traditional conservatism that may come to stand in the way of the expression of truly innovative and unnegotiated opinions and sentiments.

When we transfer Schmitz' judgement from the level of social processes to the level of personality, we may arrive at conclusions that are, at best, incomplete. Schmitz concludes that Maximus has been robbed by the tradition of his personality,[27] a conclusion anticipated by George Leonidas Koniaris, who even labels Maximus as someone pathologically caught up in his own traditional discourse, in an almost shamanic fashion.[28] This seems a quick and rather blunt transposition from the collective manifestation of culture to the individual representation through Maximus' personality. This transposition is far from unproblematic. After all, while culture itself has no personality and no aims, intentions, or goals, the same cannot be said about the *individuals* who represent this culture.[29]

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26 See Schmitz (1997), 220–225.

27 See Schmitz (1997), 224–225: "Bei Maximus (…) scheint das fragile Gleichgewicht zwischen Tradition und individueller Leistung, das dieser Analyse zugrundeliegt, empfindlich *gestört*: Die Tradition ist so übermächtig, dass eine Innovation, ein Sich Abheben völlig unmöglich ist. Die in den rhetorischen Regeln und den Bildungsanforderungen geronnene Weisheit der großen Männer der Vergangenheit scheint Maximus *vollständig zu überwältigen, ihm seinen Status als Subjekt zu rauben*—er wird zu *einem bloßen Sprachrohr dieser Tradition*." The emphases are mine.

28 See Koniaris (1982), 120.

29 A similar erroneous assumption is refuted in Heath (2004), 287, who correctly argues that a decline of political power in a community does *not* automatically result in a degeneration

Pierre Bourdieu, as a typical representative of the science of sociology, has largely by-passed this problem by installing a mediating factor between the global 'rules' (understood mostly as a manifestation of behaviour which seems to recur within a given society) and individual behaviour, and between conscious and unconscious modes of action. Bourdieu labels this mediating factor as the *habitus*.[30] Bourdieu argues that the *habitus* is an interiorized system of collectively driven inclinations that influence individual people's behaviour. The *habitus* hypothesis thus bridges, at least in Bourdieu's theory, the gap between the social life of the collective and the actions of the individual.

While Bourdieu's attempt at an explanation of human behaviour without resorting to mere personal intentions and preferences is definitely laudable from the point of view of the collective, and while his theory enables him to talk in a more general fashion about the influence of collective 'rules' on human action,[31] the question remains to what extent his theory can really account for the notion of agency on the level of the individual agent.[32] It is true that agency is to a certain extent constrained by what Bourdieu calls the *habitus*, but the *habitus* in itself cannot account for a full explanation of individual behaviour. In other words, Bourdieu's main focus throughout his work remains on the collective, i.e. that which can be extrapolated from individual actions. For a sociologist, this approach is justified by his interest in society,[33] but for a literary critic, who finds himself confronted with *individual* texts displaying *individual* positions *vis-à-vis* the collective, resorting oneself to the *habitus* as an overall explanation of individual behaviour reduces the rhetorical and psychological complexities behind a certain mode of action (in this case a literary text) to such an extent that it may offer a distorted view on the author's personality.

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of the use of rhetoric, as rhetoric remains of paramount importance for *individuals* trying to realize their personal goals within a community: "One might attach considerable importance to victory or defeat over a personal enemy or a rival for standing within the local community, even if the ostensible occasion of the dispute is intrinsically trivial."

30 For a more extensive discussion of the complicated notion of *habitus*, see Bourdieu (1972), 174–189. It should not surprise that Bourdieu is also interested in the notion of pedagogy as a crucial factor in the instalment of the *habitus* (see, e.g., Bourdieu—Passeron (1970)). From this perspective, it is quite understandable why and how Schmitz (1997) comes to his hypothesis that *paideia* fulfils a role in the Roman Empire that is quite similar to the mechanisms described by Bourdieu for more modern times.

31 See Bouveresse (1999), 49.

32 See, e.g., Finkelberg (2003), 146–147.

33 However, Margolis (1999) convincingly argues that one of Bourdieu's main problems is the fact that he is still driven by universal structuralist concepts to explain social behaviour according to absolute rules.

For our present purpose of offering an individualizing interpretation of Maximus' communication with his audience, the *habitus* ought better be replaced by the notion of *repertoire*, which, from a rhetorical perspective, functions as the background against which people act, but which does not predetermine people's thoughts and actions. The *habitus* hypothesis forces the analyst to come up with a collective explanation of individual behaviour which is not in itself wrong, but remains blind to the individual psychological variation that may exist behind what can 'objectively' be labelled as the same type of behaviour.

Working with the notion of repertoire, however, will force us to give a careful reconstruction of the debates in which Maximus inscribes himself. As a result, the first extensive chapter of this study will examine the history of the conflict between philosophy, sophistry, and rhetoric, and will discuss the manifold individual appropriations of this conflict by more or less concurrent Imperial intellectuals. All this, after all, constitutes the interpretive horizon against which Maximus conceptualized his own practice of philosophical oratory, and which provides the most appropriate access to his work for a historicist interpretation.

Furthermore, a notable consequence of Bourdieu's (and, to a certain extent, also Foucault's) theory of agency is that it seems to attribute agency—for as far as the very concept is accepted—merely to innovative individuals who divert from the general power structures, whether conceptualized as *habitus* or as *discourse*. In this mode of thinking, the mere reproduction of the traditional repertoire is seen as a mere result of the blind submission to the *habitus* and not as a rhetorical moment during which an individual realizes his own rhetorical goals in relation to his present situation and his present audience. This mode of thinking is also dominant in the so-called critical 'poststructuralist' discourses, such as gender theory. Notice how Judith Butler defines agency primarily in terms of variation: to her signification is "*not a founding act, but rather a regulated process of repetition* that both conceals itself and enforces its rules precisely through the production of substantializing effects. In a sense, all signification takes place within the orbit of the compulsion to repeat; "agency," then, is to be located within the possibility of a variation on that repetition."[34]

Butler's position is quite understandable, given her critical incentive to show that stereotyped meanings concerning gender roles are communicated through an act of cultural repetition, surmount the level of individual intention,

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34 Butler (1990), 145 (her italics). Butler (1999) forms a reaction to Bourdieu's theory, in the typically critical and deconstructionist manner that characterizes Butler's work.

and are therefore hard to eradicate from people's belief systems. Yet her critical gaze obscures the more obvious point that some people also rhetorically benefit from the existence of these stereotypes, and have good reason to encourage the repetition of the current societal values. By narrowing down the domain of agency to that which *varies* on repetition, Butler excludes the hypothesis that the negotiation of meaning is not only (or merely) naively passed on from one generation to another, but can also undergo strategic modification and rhetorical mediation *within and through the very act of repetition*.

Modern rhetorical thinking has come to alternative conceptions of the role of agency within a wider social background. Already in 1935, Kenneth Burke's *Permanence and Change: An Anatomy of Purpose* anticipated many of the scientific sociological claims made after the appearance of his study by demonstrating how change and permanence are negotiated through individual intentions that engage with wider social norms.[35] Focusing more radically on the individual, Burke designs a 'poetic' model of action in which the mere reproduction of social values serves as the common ground against which rhetorical communication can be developed. Viewed from this angle, there is a role for a form of agency that evidently engages with traditional norms, but never loses its own proper purpose. Burke successfully refutes the assumptions proper to the field of sociology by confidently demonstrating, even if not in a *direct* dialogue with later sociological theories, that a rhetorical model always puts the 'scientific' observations about the wider context in an individual perspective, and thus adds a level of signification for which sociological analysis lacks a proper hermeneutic framework.

Such an alternative view on the different possibilities of agency, starting not from the perspective of discourse but from the individual rhetorical moment, has inspired an approach to Maximus that is largely rhetorical in nature and opposes itself to the mere intuition that he can only be a weak individual overpowered by tradition. We will, of course, never know exactly which thought processes guided the composition of Maximus' *dialexeis*, but our analysis will substantially argue that the presentation of traditional material does testify to a more programmatic and coherent response to the discursive challenges of his day than previous scholarship has been willing to recognize.

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35 I consulted the revised version of 1954. For the individuality of intentions and a deconstruction of the scientific method of analogy, see Burke (1954), esp. 103 sqq., but in fact the entire book is quite instructive. I also find Bitzer (1978) most helpful to understand the interaction between the individual and the collective from a rhetorical point of view.

In conclusion, an exclusive focus on the sociological, macrocultural, or doctrinal aspects of Maximus' orations offers only one side of the coin. Schmitz' reading of Maximus starts from a different paradigm and from different research questions, which preclude a more individual reading of the *dialexeis* as a rhetorical act by a shrewd self-styled philosopher who functionally uses the tradition in order to legitimize his own authoritative position. Martin Korenjak has, in passing, already criticized Schmitz' attribution of Maximus' style to the latter's weak personality by pointing out that the tradition also serves as a shared frame of reference to establish a communicational bond between the speaker and his audience.[36] However, the argument along this line can be pursued even further, if we also take Maximus' authorial voice into account. The questions in this book relate not as much to the way in which the tradition masters Maximus, as to the way in which Maximus masters the tradition. How does the Tyrian discursively modulate the voice of the tradition so that it authorizes his own position as a philosophical orator?

From Macrolevel to Microlevel

A couple of words are in order about the concrete set-up of this study. As we have already discussed, starting from the notion of repertoire rather than *habitus* compels us to take into account the rich discursive tradition of the conflict between philosophy, rhetoric, and sophistry. Only if we understand the fluidity of these domains as a result of individual appropriations, both in previous eras and in Imperial times, can we fully assess Maximus' self-advertisement as a genuine philosopher.

Especially in the face of the lack of detailed information about the Tyrian's life, such a contextualization adds a lot of depth to our discursive analysis of the *dialexeis*. Since the dynamic nature of the intellectual antagonisms is best presented according to individual perspectives, the first chapter of this study examines individual interpretations of the conflict between philosophy, rhetoric, and sophistry in twelve intellectuals. Only after we have thus come to an understanding of the unstable status of our sources can we open up for Maximus' audacious yet not unprecedented claim to philosophical authority on the basis of his philosophically informed oratory. This claim, then, will be the subject of the second chapter of this book.

36 See Korenjak (2000), 51 n. 37.

While this set-up may cause us to hardly discuss Maximus during the first hundred pages of this book, it has the obvious advantage that it will later enable us to make some bolder assumptions about where Maximus should be situated in this dynamic discursive field. Such an audacious approach to the contextualization of Maximus' orations can bring us closer to an understanding of the negotiation of philosophical knowledge in the Roman Empire. Moreover, the audacity of the project is not without its parallels in the practice of literary interpretation itself, often conceptually represented as the hermeneutic circle, in which one interpretative assumption sets in motion yet another circle, which may in its turn bring about new interpretative insights, and so on. The studies of Maximus' contemporaries in the first chapter of this book can already be put to use as installing some main assumptions as to the problematic interrelation between philosophy, rhetoric, and sophistry in the Roman Empire. Starting from this basis, we can ask ourselves how Maximus resolves this tension in his own work, how he tries to 'sell' his resolution to his audience, and which role he reserves for which particular part of the tradition. This, combined with an analysis of the discursive tone of the *dialexeis*, forms the main ground for granting Maximus his own place in the literary and philosophical dynamics of his era.

Why Maximus?

Finally, it is worth asking ourselves why Maximus would be worth studying at all, given that his work has been notorious for annoying so many previous generations of scholars. Indeed, Maximus' traditional discourses generally sound so familiar that an educated reader of the *dialexeis* is almost inevitably driven to a judgement in which the adjectives 'tedious', 'repetitious', and 'boring' are never far away.[37] In a sense, this judgement is entirely understandable within the standards of modern scholarship, where creative innovation and critical thinking are the main reasons for a positive appreciation. Add to that the postmodern and poststructuralist approach to texts as discursive documents negotiating the author's individual and collective identity in relation to an established cultural heritage, and it is not hard to see why Second Sophistic scholarship has enjoyed such an upsurge in the last few decades. For a Second Sophistic scholar, there appears to be an agreeable number of cunning literary texts in which talented speakers self-consciously reflect upon their own status

37 See Schmitz (1997), 221: "Seine Predigten sind unerträglich langweilig."

as representatives of Greekness in an era where the Greek political pride suffers heavily from Roman domination.[38] Confronted with such a wealth of intriguing texts, it may not be so surprising after all that a collection such as that of Maximus remains largely in the dark.

As the negative judgement of modern scholarship has involuntarily shown, Maximus is, almost more than any other Imperial orator and philosopher, willing to hide his own innovating personality behind the mask of an omnipresent traditional frame of reference, to such an extent that we even find no allusions to events after the death of Alexander the Great. Many have either explicitly or implicitly concluded that this is the inevitable result of Maximus' own weak personality. However, it makes more sense to see this seeming lack of personality as a self-conscious strategy through which he can authorize his message, and, of course, via the message, also the *messenger*.

What, then, does this teach us about Imperial philosophy and the cultural phenomenon of the Second Sophistic? The case of Maximus can be regarded as a provocation to abandon our own quick judgements about what we define as 'good' literature and philosophy, judgements which are partly inspired by a modern, high-brow understanding of poetics. Maximus' orations, by showing just how few innovative ideas need to emerge from the representation of traditional authorities in order to be operative along the line of contemporary norms and expectations, confront us with the radical consequences of the poetics of the conservative climate in which he operated. This in itself forms a crucial addition to our knowledge of this culture, which a study of a more original author, such as Plutarch or Favorinus, cannot offer. It thus complements the image of the Second Sophistic that may appear from the—inevitably highly elevated—sources that have generally come down to us through the process of selection. Maximus' case directs us toward another level of this culture's poetics, one which—admittedly—only seldom achieves true heights, but which appears, as a result, all the more recognizable.[39] Maximus' orations provide us with some precious insight in the *parvenu* culture of Imperial Rome, where

38 Whitmarsh (2001) is partly written with the purpose of showing how relevant these Imperial texts can be as intertexts for a reflection about our own postmodern, postcolonial, and poststructural existence. See also other important studies and collections of essays about the relation between Imperial literature and Imperial identity, such as Bowie (1974), Woolf (1994), Goldhill (ed.) (2001), Schmitz—Wiater (eds.) (2011) (albeit primarily concerned with the culture immediately before the High Roman Empire), and Richter (2011).

39 Quite a similar argument in favour of studying Maximus' orations, though not entirely the same, can be found in Szarmach (1985), 126. See also the good (albeit brief) discussion in Bowersock (2002).

philosophy was not solely the work of 'strong' philosophers *à la* Epictetus and Plutarch, who appear to display a transhistorical greatness, but also the domain of knowledge transmission that is subjected to a more economical treatment of sources. More often than not, scholars have eagerly joined Lucian and many of his contemporaries in despising such practices, but there are nevertheless some obvious merits in describing Maximus' undertaking *before* condemning it.

CHAPTER 1

Philosophy, Rhetoric, and Sophistry in the Roman Empire

If we want to know whether Maximus of Tyre was likely to be seen by his contemporaries as either a philosopher or a sophist, we first need to give ourselves an account of the historical conflict between rhetoric and philosophy in the Roman Empire. Plato's famous castigation of the sophistic art had a major influence on the thinkers of this intellectual environment, who used it in their response to the re-emergence of the art of sophistry in what has commonly been labelled as the 'Second Sophistic'. As we will see, the historical reality surrounding this conflict is far from uncontested, as much depends on the representation of the fields of rhetoric, sophistry, and philosophy in individual authors. There were many definitions of what counted as philosophical, and this obviously brought about a flexible discursive domain in which the terms philosophy, sophistry, and rhetoric were not so much denotative anchor points as discursive instigators of a vivid disputation about the proper application of instructive, everyday, or conceited forms of rhetoric.

While previous studies have somewhat downplayed the importance of the internal diversity in individual definitions of philosophy, sophistry, and rhetoric, the overview in this chapter aims at a radical bottom-up reconstruction, focusing on the internal coherence of individual viewpoints and demonstrating how this coherence in turn informs the history of Imperial philosophy. By means of a new and methodologically informed reading of our sources, we will focus on the representation of the aforementioned fields in twelve Imperial authors. After these individual discussions, which can in themselves also serve as proper introductions to these thinkers' resolutions of this conflict, we will witness the emergence of some notable tendencies that we must bear in mind when addressing Maximus' functional definition of these same terms, along with the probable reception of his ideas in his sociocultural climate. Given that we hardly have any information about his life and career apart from his literary texts, we must embrace concurrent voices in order to appreciate his audacious appropriation of these fields as a functional response to the discursive reality of his day. Moreover, the functionalist reading method advocated here (and further used throughout this entire book) offers the prime (if not the only) way out of our own prejudices when it comes to proper philosophy. By means of amplification, the presentation of these twelve case studies here deliberately

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intends to prepare our minds for the acceptance of the remarkable flexibility with which the term philosophy was coined in this historical period as a legitimation of one's intellectual practices.

1 The Traditional Conflict: A Short Overview

The traditional conflict between the field of philosophy and that of rhetoric is probably one of the most prominent and influential legacies of Greco-Roman culture.[1] While pre-classical sages such as Solon could still fruitfully combine the *sophia* and esteem of a philosopher with thoughtful public activity, the acceptance of this very combination is undermined a couple of generations later, when the love of wisdom is no longer unquestionably placed in the same category as a busy life in the open. In the context of the Athenian democracy, the art of speaking became an important pillar of social life, while some philosophers started their inquiries into an invariable truth by *questioning* the unstable public dynamics of persuasion.

The most decisive foundation for the conflict between rhetoric and philosophy is laid in the First Sophistic movement and in Socrates' response to it as recorded (or created!) in the Platonic dialogues. Ever since the first generation of sophists claimed to embody wisdom as a result of their mastery of rhetorical language and reasoning, Plato's Socrates has vividly challenged the grounds on which Gorgias *cum suis* built their authority. This attack against rhetoric is part of Plato's own redefinition of philosophy as a *technê* that is different from other professions such as politics and poetry. From this point on, it seems, we have a break between the *sophia* of the great poet, public speaker, or statesman on the one hand,[2] and the *sophia* of the philosopher on the other, whose Socratic task it is to question the validity of everyday beliefs and to search for higher forms of truth (which, according to Plato, were situated in the world of the Ideas). Nevertheless, given Plato's ambitious project to make philosophy (in *his* definition of it) the centre of socio-political life, the idea that the ideal

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1 See, e.g., the broad overview in IJsseling (1976). See also, both for a critical discussion of Plato's attack on rhetoric and for more recent developments of the conflict, Vickers (1988).

2 Think, for instance, of the old tradition of the Seven Sages, who had in their ranks people as diverse as Thales of Miletus (mathematician, business man, and politician), Solon of Athens (philosopher, poet, and statesman), and Periander of Corinth (a tyrant who was first considered as a bringer of peace and prosperity in Corinth, but who was later seen as a bad tyrant by, e.g., Aristotle).

philosopher could (and should) also be a ruler was still strongly articulated, but the combination of rhetorical powers and philosophical insights was no longer as evident.

In an attempt to show that there are in fact objective philosophical principles that surmount the merely interpersonal dynamics of persuasion, Plato's *Gorgias* and his *Phaedrus* display a Socrates attacking the very foundation of sophistic wisdom by disproving the status of rhetoric as a *technê* and refuting Lysias' speech on love respectively. Plato's dialogues continue to exert a strong influence on later generations of philosophers, who use them as inspiring intertexts for assaults on what they believe to be futile and pernicious uses of rhetorical skills by their contemporaries. As Marina McCoy has argued, however, later appropriations of Plato's aggressive condemnation of the sophists' practices may not do full justice to Plato's own attitude toward rhetoric, in that he did seem to acknowledge a rhetorical component in the treatment of philosophical topics.[3]

Of course, Plato's views are not the only reflections on the interrelation between sophistry, rhetoric, and philosophy. The fourth-century rhetorician Isocrates, for instance, aimed at a reconciliation of rhetorical and philosophical education, and proved himself a far more ardent believer in the potential power of democracy than Plato.[4] In his treatise *Against the sophists*, he sets his own methods apart from the sophistic teachers of his day, putting forward the study of discourse as a prime device for developing ethical understanding and virtuous conduct.[5] Isocrates had his own share of believers. The first-century (BCE) literary critic and historian Dionysius of Halicarnassus, for instance, honoured Isocrates' reconciling voice to such an extent that he recommends his shining example to everyone who is interested in philosophy and yet wants to benefit many people.[6] Nevertheless, when we look at his reception in general, Isocrates has never become a model as powerful as Plato, not even for people like Maximus of Tyre, who adopt a similarly reconciliatory position between philosophy and rhetoric. The overpowering voice of Plato seems to have pushed Isocrates' paradigm of doing 'practical' philosophy to the margins of the history books.[7]

3 McCoy (2008).
4 Cf. Morgan (2004).
5 Cf. the impressive analysis of this short treatise in Too (1995), 151–199.
6 D.H. *Isoc.* 4.
7 Note that in Plato's *Phaedrus* (279A), Socrates praises the young Isocrates for having a certain natural potential for philosophy. In his commentary on this dialogue, however, De Vries (1969), 17, interprets these words as plain irony. For a more nuanced assessment, proposing a less antagonistic relation between Plato and Isocrates, see Erbse (1971).

Another view on these matters is offered by Aristotle.[8] In line with his belief that the study of human behaviour and institutions offers practical wisdom, Aristotle set out to discuss the art of rhetoric in three books. Unlike his teacher Plato, he was not solely interested in a stable, unchangeable truth, but also in the dynamic means of persuasion during the moments of contact between the citizens of a community. Aristotle's viewpoints on rhetoric as a device that facilitates practical decision-making prove relevant and influential up until the twentieth century and beyond.[9]

With Isocrates and Aristotle, we also have examples of monological prose texts written by self-proclaimed philosophers. Even formally speaking, they thus set themselves apart from the Platonic tradition, in which the dialogue guides speculative discussions and is therefore conceived as more philosophical. Both communicational models generally call for a different reader response. While the monologue seems to subject its public to the more authoritative assertions of the speaker, the dialogue presents itself as a scrutinous discourse that presents several opinions about the matter at hand and thus asks for the reader's critical assessment.[10] As a result, it is not hard to imagine that the dialogue became a notable carrier of speculative philosophical thought. This does not mean, however, that there were no other ways of putting philosophical ideas into words. Isocrates' speeches and Aristotle's technical treatises have already been mentioned, and philosophy, from early on, has also communicated its ideas through didactic poetry. Furthermore, and quite interestingly for the present discussion, the Cynical tradition of the so-called *diatribe*, which is believed to be invented by Bion of Borysthenes around the beginning of the third century BCE, took the promulgation of philosophical ideas quite radically into the public domain, where performative talent functioned as an obvious asset.[11] Even though the term *diatribe* does most probably not correspond with a 'genre' in Antiquity itself (and is thus largely a scholarly invention),[12] the fact

8 For conceptual and actual points of contact between Aristotle and Isocrates, see Depew (2004) and Garver (2004).

9 See, most conspicuously, the role of Aristotle in the development of the 'New Rhetoric' in Perelman—Olbrecht-Tyteca (1958).

10 Cf. Goldhill (2008b), 1: "With dialogue comes also a recognition of the necessity of dissent, persuasion (spin) and the repression of minority views." See also the general philosophical discussion of the genre of the dialogue in Buber (1923).

11 Quite interestingly, in D.L. 4.47, Bion is called a sophist who gave the enemies of philosophy plenty of occasion to blaspheme.

12 A traditional overview, typical of the older view of the *diatribe* as a distinctive genre, is offered in Oltramare (1926). For a more modern discussion of philosophical prose in general, see Schenkeveld (1997).

remains that the texts that have commonly been so labelled testify to vivid performances of philosophical invectives against the vices of the common man. In this manner, philosophical preachers stepped out of the genre of the dialogue to give a form of shock therapy to the audience, designed so as to persuade people to abandon their ordinary concerns in life. Quite interestingly, as the communication of philosophical thought does not limit itself to one distinctive dialogical genre, the question remains (and becomes quite urgent) as to what, structurally speaking, sets a truly philosophical speaker apart from the mere sophistic babblers against whom so many philosophers warn their audiences.

One final tradition that is worth mentioning in this context is that of the Platonic Academy. Among the generations of philosophers after Plato's death, there arose a tension within his school between the Platonists, who believed that they could derive firm doctrines from Plato's legacy, and the Sceptic Academics, who started from the aporetic character of Plato's dialogues to doubt each and every assertion that could be made about the world.[13] They proclaimed a continuous suspension of judgement (*epochê*), which they hoped to achieve by disproving truth claims on each and every subject, thus demonstrating that everything that could be believed to be true could yet again be opposed by a different argument. However, since Sceptic Academics also had to partake in everyday pursuits such as eating and sleeping in order to stay alive and conform to social obligations, the second-century (BCE) leader of the Academy, Carneades, advocated that for such matters the *pithanon* (the probable) could be taken as a directive, thus bringing a criterion with a distinctive rhetorical flavour into the field of philosophy. It should not surprise, therefore, that within the confines of the Academic and the Aristotelian school, it was customary to discuss philosophical dilemmas *in utramque partem*,[14] even though common belief tends to attribute such practices to the sophists.

These few examples from the philosophical tradition may suffice to demonstrate that the rigid distinction between 'rhetorical' sophists and 'philosophical' philosophers is in reality not as clear-cut as in theory. In fact, much philosophical reflection implicitly or explicitly deals with the degree to which rhetoric can be part of philosophical communication, and at what point an overindulgent care for verbal phrasing makes a speech fall in the category of sophistry rather

13 Cf. Opsomer (1998), 9–13, with further bibliography. See also, more recently, Bonazzi (2003).

14 Cf. Quint. 12.1.33 sqq., who gives the example of Carneades as an outstanding rhetorical talent. See also D.L. 4.62–66.

than philosophy. Plato's radical condemnation of sophistic rhetoric obviously set an agenda that remained thoroughly influential throughout many centuries to follow, but it did not settle the matter once and for all. Let us now examine the way in which this debate was given shape in the Roman era.

2 Greco-Roman Imperial Culture

For reasons of clarity and by means of introduction, we will first discuss the three different poles of the conflict between sophistry, philosophy, and rhetoric in the Roman Empire separately, as they have mostly been treated in traditional scholarship. In an additional section, however, we shall see that the division between these fields breaks down as soon as we look at a number of individual or institutional appropriations that seem to strike the middle ground between these three domains, and force us to adopt a radically dynamic approach when analysing our sources.

2.1 *Sophistry*

When we talk about Greek sophistry in the Roman era, an immediate association with the Second Sophistic movement comes to mind.[15] Thanks to the biographer Philostratus and the *ipsissima verba* of some reputed sophists of this age, we get an overview of a reasonably large number of sophists who lived during the first two centuries CE. These sophists were high-class virtuoso performers who travelled around the Roman Empire and astounded various audiences with their amazing rhetorical skill. The rhetorical genre in which they worleed was *epideixis*, consisting of speeches composed so as to display the speaker's verbal splendour, often without bearing any direct political or juridical relevance.[16]

Nevertheless, these speeches did have some indirect political relevance, in that they naturalized the elite dominance over the common people in the local politics of Imperial Greece. Building on insights from the anthropological studies of Pierre Bourdieu,[17] Thomas Schmitz introduced the notion of 'symbolic capital' to understand the value of the performance of *paideia* as a constitutive component of the social order in the Greek cities of the Roman Empire.[18]

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15 Good introductions to the world of the Second Sophistic include Anderson (1993), Swain (1996), Schmitz (1997), and Whitmarsh (2001) and (2005).

16 For the great variety in epideictic speeches in the Imperial period, see Pernot (1993).

17 See esp. Bourdieu (1979).

18 Schmitz (1997).

He proposed that public discourse delivered by talented representatives of the aristocratic class consolidated the social interaction between the higher and the lower classes, as it naturalized the elitist power over the common people through the performance of a high-class education, which was only available to the well-off. As a result, Schmitz and Bourdieu point to the social relevance of elite education in the distinction of a certain social group and in the preservation of aristocratic power.[19]

Moreover, these epideictic performances were also constitutive for the Greeks' cultural identity, for they can be seen as a ritual re-enactment of the Greek cultural dominance over the Roman rulers, which was largely recognized by the Romans themselves.[20] The Greeks essentially presented themselves as the heirs of their great Greek predecessors from the classical age, whose lives and texts they honoured and repeatedly discussed in their public declamations.[21] The reputed sophists and other *literati* of this age even made use of an artificial Atticist *Kunstsprache*, in which basically every word or grammatical construction had to be attested in the classical literature.[22] Obviously, the sophists who performed in front of large audiences all over the Empire were supposed to know Greek history and Greek culture very well, and their orations had to give a continuous proof of this abundant knowledge. Through their cultural knowledge, the so-called *pepaideumenoi* distinguished themselves from the uneducated masses.

The struggle for the title of *pepaideumenos* was not only fought out by distinctive social classes or different ethnicities. There was also a large competition for symbolic capital between the individual sophists themselves, since only a limited number of sophists could become the honourable representa-

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19 See Bourdieu—Passeron (1970).

20 For the interaction between Greek cultural identity and the Roman ruler, see Alcock (1993) and Woolf (1994). Edited volumes devoted to Greek cultural identity are Goldhill (ed.) (2001) and Konstan—Saïd (eds.) (2006).

21 The most obvious form that proves the sophists' reliance on the past is the *meletê*, in which a sophist adopts a historical persona (e.g., Alcibiades) addressing the persona's original public (e.g., the Athenian Assembly) concerning an historical situation (e.g., the Sicilian expedition). For a general overview of sophistic declamation, see Russell (1983) and Anderson (1993), 47–63. For the relevance of *meletai* as ideological and political performances, see Schmitz (1999). For a more individual approach (in addition to Schmitz' viewpoints), see Webb (2006).

22 The relevance of the purist use of Atticism has largely been neglected by traditional scholarship, which focused quite exclusively on the binary opposition between Asianism and Atticism (see, e.g., Rohde (1886)). For a discussion of the social role of Atticism, see Swain (1996), 43–64.

tives of the Greek cultural elite. Moreover, along with the title of *pepaideumenos* came considerable signs of honour, such as money, public inscriptions in which their title of 'sophist', '*rhêtôr*', and/or 'philosopher' was recorded,[23] influence in local politics,[24] and in some cases even high public offices in the Emperor's administration,[25] all of which could be won or lost during public declamations. An Imperial sophist thus performed, and often even improvised, under the continuous pressure of risking being unmasked as less educated than his adversaries and losing his conspicuous position in society.[26] It is therefore not surprising that we find in Philostratus' *Lives of the sophists* a large number of anecdotes illustrating a tense rivalry between famous sophists.[27] The feelings of reciprocal envy were not only the expression of the sophists' anxieties and frustrations, but also a part of their strategic self-fashioning.[28] The public character of their encounters most likely supported a sophistic zero-sum game, in which one sophist's loss of reputation and credibility contributed to another's fame and honour.[29] A sophist's daily practice thus not only consisted of positively advertising his level of cultural knowledge, but also of questioning that of others.

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23 See Puech (2002).

24 See Brunt (1990), 276–277 and Lendon (1997), 7.

25 Herodes Atticus is a good example of this phenomenon (see his life in Phil. *VS*. 545–566). See, more generally, Bowersock (1969). The historical importance of the Second Sophistic orators has been questioned by Bowie (1982).

26 An example which illustrates this anxiety quite well is Lucian's lengthy excuse for having made an elementary mistake while greeting a patron of his in the *Pro Lapsu*.

27 One of the best-known rivalries was probably that between Polemo and Favorinus (Phil. *VS*. 490–491). See, on the physical and other differences between these two speakers, Gleason (1995).

28 Cf. Cairns (2003), 240: "Envy aims at ideal equality, but thrives on perceived inequality under a wide range of actual social conditions." See also ibid., 251: "To understand the politics of envy we need to recognize how the notion of envy is transmuted and manipulated in a contest of competing ideological constructions that reflect differing perspectives on the nature, possibility and desirability of political and social equality." The talent to deliver public speeches can readily be counted among those conditions provoking interpersonal inequality.

29 An interesting case in which this zero-sum reasoning applies is that of the custom of changing names on old statues for new honourable people, a practice that is denounced by Dio Chrysostom in the *Rhodian oration* (*Or*. 31.70: "[B]ut where a man's statue has been given to another, the one who has been robbed is by no means on an equality with the man who received it. For the latter has gained the honour, if you can really call it such, whereas the other has nothing left"). See also Plut. *Laud.Ips*. 547e, where it is argued that self-praise always involves the depreciation of others.

The public of the speeches delivered by these sophists was probably fairly large and had a conspicuous impact on the performance, and influenced a sophist's eventual success.[30] Unlike the stressful speech delivery, attendance at a public declamation was probably also seen as an agreeable pastime during which the public was entertained by the *pepaideumenoi*'s dazzling verbal splendour.

A final remark on the field of sophistry concerns its poetics. A look at the literature of this period teaches us that the sophists' urge to show off their knowledge of their literary heritage brings about a relatively stable canon of revered texts and persons from the classical age.[31] This is not to say that there was no innovation possible, but the general poetics of this period seemed to depart from knowledge about rather than from plain rejection of the established authorities.[32] As an obvious consequence of the predominantly oral form of their production, most sophists were probably at least as much interested in gaining momentary success in their own age as in occupying a 'perpetual' place in the canon.[33] As a matter of fact, both the rhetorical form in which the performers spoke (which was inspired by a long tradition of rhetorical education) and the stable canon to which they referred in their speeches contribute to a relatively conservative cultural climate, which had an impact on other fields of literary production as well.

30 See Korenjak (2000).

31 Interestingly, because of its apparent incapacity to welcome literary renewal in its canon, the literary system of the Imperial period would, according to Even-Zohar (1990), 26 have to be labelled as an *unstable* system, as it is constantly on the verge of an entire collapse. However, the remarkable constancy of this specific literary canon seems to put question marks over Even-Zohar's standpoint as being thoroughly influenced by our own contemporary literary climate. Cf. the stable image of Roman politics in Takács (2009), 152–153: "In an ideological world that was tradition-bound and a political landscape that suppressed freedom of speech, radical changes in ideology and politics were necessarily incremental. Such changes as did take place were bound to do so within the existing structure and to employ traditional vocabulary, the rhetoric of power."

32 Most (2011) situates the origins of this tendency, which he links to encyclopaedism and compilation, in the early principate, and argues that its manifestation might have to do with a general *Zeitgeist* that was characterized by fatigue over the constant state of war and longed for thorough stabilization, not just in the field of politics, but also in intellectual pursuits. Whatever the explanation behind it, this tendency remains quite powerful during the first centuries CE.

33 Cf. Korenjak (2012), who also discusses two notable exceptions to this rule, Aelius Aristides and Hermogenes of Tarsus, whose exceptional status is subsequently explained by biographical interpretations.

There are several areas of literary production where this tendency can be observed. In oral speech delivery, we can see how many of the rhetorical exercises which the sophistic speakers set out for themselves actually demand a thorough knowledge of historical and literary figures and situations, for such elements were the cornerstone of a credible historical *ethopoeia*. In a different domain, Karen Ní Mheallaigh has shown how several texts by authors such as Antonius Diogenes, Lucian, and Dictys contain an element that she labels as pseudo-documentarism.[34] In these stories, the author's *inventio* seems to be hidden behind a flair of authenticity, which results in playful strategies of authorization. Similar strategies that pull the reader's attention to the author's rhetorical elaboration rather than to his *inventio* can be observed in Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius*,[35] and in Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*.[36] Finally, in his short introductory treatise *Zeuxis or Antiochus*, Lucian complains about the fact that his contemporaries tend to praise him more for his literary innovation (especially his 'new' invention of using the genre of the literary dialogue for comical purposes), whereas he wants himself rather to be seen as a skilled verbal virtuoso who writes and speaks with knowledge and craftsmanship.[37]

The list above is certainly not exhaustive, but gives a good general idea of the fairly conservative literary dynamics of this era. Again, these statements and authorial self-presentations do not prevent the literary field from displaying some innovations, but it is important to realize that these innovations tend to be framed in line with established procedures and based on a thorough knowledge of the traditional authorities. The fact that knowledge of the ancient authorities and the ability to inscribe one's own practice in a long-standing tradition was, in this literary field, probably as important as (if not more important than) the dynamics of literary innovation, will prove quite relevant for my interpretation of Maximus of Tyre's *dialexeis* as a rational response to the needs of his time, which will be offered in the next chapter of this book.

34 Ni Mheallaigh (2008).

35 For the link between Philostratus' biography of Apollonius and the Second Sophistic, see Gyselinck—Demoen (2009).

36 See Lauwers (2011a).

37 See Luc. *Zeux*. See also his emphasis on tradition, knowledge, and craftsmanship in Luc. *Prom.Es*. Cf. Baldwin (1973), 64: "Precedents tended to be as important to the orator as to the dogmatic Atticist lexicographers." For a more playful interpretation of Lucian's interplay with the tradition in these introductory speeches, see Branham (1989), 42–43.

2.2 *Philosophy*

While the Imperial sophists eagerly searched for public praise and repetitious commendations for their extraordinary talent, many Imperial philosophers claimed to concern themselves with more serious matters. Following in the footsteps of their great philosophical ancestors, such as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Zeno, or Epicurus, they define their occupation as a search for the truth and the good life.

Philosophy was held in high esteem in the Roman Empire. Despite some dissonant eruptions of hatred, such as Vespasian's and Domitian's initiative to banish all philosophers from the city of Rome—an act that was condemned by subsequent generations—the institution of philosophy appears to have attracted the interest of a good deal of intellectuals who were operative in the intellectual circles of the Roman Empire.[38] It is important to bear in mind that philosophy was often not merely represented as an intellectual pastime, but rather as a proper way of life. Ethics was thus a crucial element in Imperial philosophy.

The most renowned illustration of this concrete philosophical influence on the lives of Imperial citizens is probably Marcus Aurelius' overt predilection for Stoic philosophy, which immediately proves that philosophy could even affect the Roman Emperor himself. More than rhetoric, which was also practised quite extensively in Rome, philosophy was almost exclusively associated with Greek cultural heritage, for Greece was the land of the Thales, Parmenides, Pythagoras, Empedocles, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Zeno, Epicurus, Diogenes, and many others, who all determined philosophy's eventual outlook.

The Roman attitude towards this distinctively Greek domain had grown more sympathetic over time. Whereas the influential Cato the Elder was still quite reluctant to invite Greek *mores* as preached by philosophers into the city of Rome, by Cicero's time philosophy had triggered the attention of the Roman elites, who saw in it a decent contribution to their rhetorical curriculum.[39] This elite inclination towards philosophy remained present in the subsequent centuries, which is illustrated by a figure such as Seneca Minor, a Roman aristocrat who wrote Stoic treatises in a vivid interaction with the viewpoints of the ancient Greek authorities.

In the Roman Empire, the field of philosophy almost unanimously opposed itself to the sophistic practices of its time. As we will see in the discussion of individual authors of this period, many philosophers, leaning on the age-old

38 See, e.g., Dillon (2002).

39 See the historical overview by Griffin (1989).

quarrels between the field of philosophy and that of rhetoric, reacted against what they believed to be the superficial appearance of many virtuoso sophists, and aimed to promote their own pursuit of philosophical truth and the moral improvement of their audience as a more honourable and meaningful alternative.

The philosophical invectives were not only directed against those who practised ostentatious rhetoric. There were also intense discussions between the members of the six large traditional *haireseis* or schools—Platonism (with a brand of Pythagorism), Aristotelianism, Stoicism, Epicurianism, Cynicism, and (Academic or Pyrrhonian) Scepticism. Although philosophical authority within the respective schools was no longer as centralized as in the Hellenistic era, philosophical commitment to a certain school (and to its founding father) was still an important part of a philosopher's identity,[40] which is illustrated by the four chairs of doctrinal philosophy installed in Athens by the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, each one for an elected member of Platonism, Aristotelianism, Stoicism and Epicurianism. Indeed, many philosophers still tended to ardently commit their thoughts to one traditional school and reason from this polemical angle, even though many ideas from diverse philosophical schools were in reality blended through the interventions of individual thinkers.[41]

Since there was no absolute nexus of authority concerning doctrinal issues within a philosophical *hairesis*, there were obviously rhetorical opportunities for a self-proclaimed Imperial philosopher to advertise himself as a prime representative of any given philosophical school, and to appropriate that school's authority (or, for that matter, the authority of the entire institution of philosophy) for his own practice. People in want of philosophical instruction could turn to a private teacher in philosophy who was called a *kathegetes*.[42] These teachers could also be hired by people who wanted to acquire philosophical knowledge without, however, devoting their entire life to philosophy. After all, on a wider social scale, the name '*philosophos*' operated as an honorific title, adopted by a greater number of people than a modern observer would expect.

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40 See Sedley (1989), 97: "(…) in the Greco-Roman world, especially during the Hellenistic and Roman periods, what gives philosophical movements their cohesion and identity is less a disinterested common quest for the truth than a virtually religious commitment to the authority of the founding figure."

41 A good example of this tendency is the Academic Antiochus of Ascalon (fl. first century BCE), who, in his attempt to return to the philosophy of the Old Academy, adopted doctrines from Aristotelianism and Stoicism alongside his own Platonist viewpoints. See Dillon (1977), 52–105.

42 See Glucker (1978), esp. 127–133.

As a result of all this, the title of philosopher could be claimed by a number of intellectuals with various backgrounds such as a doctor (cf. *infra*, Galen), a physical trainer,[43] or a brilliant public speaker.[44]

Another consequence of the lack of one authoritative centre for each philosophical doctrine is that philosophers tended to found and authorize their discourses with the canonical authorities of the heyday of Greek philosophy. Furthermore, we see that a philosophical teacher, who mostly operated in a private atmosphere, was considered very important for the doctrinal orientation of his pupils. Plutarch, for instance, reverently refers to his teacher Ammonius, and Arrian presents his most philosophical work as a faithful recording of the words of his master Epictetus. The teacher's importance for a philosopher's identity thus also illustrates the fairly conservative nature of Imperial philosophy, which was inclined to look back to and comment on the great philosophical authorities from the past rather than taking a radically different stance in the on-going philosophical debates.[45]

Again, as with the notion of conservatism in the sophistic sphere, the use of the label 'conservative' deserves some qualification. It is definitely not the case that the field of philosophy has by Imperial times turned into a sterile place where no new or inventive ideas could grow. Quite to the contrary, as a result of the polemics between philosophical schools, there were vivid debates on diverse aspects of ethics, physics, and logic, in which some fierce objections against a certain dogmatic standpoint forced the supporters to dig quite deep in order to defend their original belief, and thus expand the doctrinal boundaries of their predecessors. Consequently, we find many creative and innovative standpoints and arguments in this period, but these innovations tend to be framed as contributions to traditional beliefs (in line with one's respective *hairesis*) or combinations of the viewpoints of traditional authorities. No wonder that the genre of commentary became very popular in Imperial times, as it gave the writer the opportunity to offer close explanations of authoritative texts that are believed to contain inherent sources of truth.[46]

The dynamics of canonization and reverence for past authorities run quite parallel with the general conservative nature of the Second Sophistic. Both

43 On the case of one Asclepiades, see König (2005), 6.

44 For a more extensive overview of the field of philosophy and its appropriations, see Lauwers—Roskam (2012).

45 This obviously caused some anachronistic discrepancies between the society in which philosophy functioned and the content of the philosophical debates. See Trapp (2007a), with the review in Boys-Stones (2007), esp. 121–122.

46 See Hadot (1987).

fields encourage a tendency to frame new and inventive ideas and discourses as humble contributions to the great authorities of the past. A seeming exception to this tendency might be the sympotic discussions in, for example, Plutarch's *Table talk*, where there appears to have been room for creative speculation concerning a wide range of philosophical and other topics. Nevertheless, the discussions are quite amply interspersed with all kinds of canonized authorities (both for aesthetic ornament and for the authorization of one's argument), and even the concept of scientific speculation itself already had some authoritative advertisers in Aristotle and his Peripatetic school.[47] It thus appears that both the sophistic and the philosophical practices of this age overtly supported a link between knowledge of the past and cultural authority within each respective field.

2.3 *Rhetoric*

Rhetoric was one of the main cornerstones of Greco-Roman education. After a couple of years of study with the grammarian, where the young pupils were introduced into the principles of proper Greek and/or Roman language use and also made acquainted with the works of the literary canon, those who aspired to a public career turned to a *rhetor* for the perfection of their rhetorical skills. During this stage, pupils were subjected to a formal training according to preliminary exercises called *progymnasmata*, some handbooks of which have fortunately come down to us.[48] Just like the fields of sophistry and philosophy, the field of rhetorical schooling was also highly conservative, which can be illustrated by a quick glance at the stability of the frame of reference in the exercises over a period of several centuries (during which there were nonetheless large social and cultural changes).[49]

This does not mean, yet again, that there were no evolutions in rhetorical theory. On the basis of rhetorical handbooks, many teachers of rhetoric had a fairly free attitude towards the theories of their predecessors. This is illustrated quite well by *stasis* theory, which seeks to guide the invention of arguments by offering a strict set of questions to be posed to the matter at hand. Hermagoras, the second-century (BCE) inventor of *stasis* theory, introduced four separate *staseis*, which subsequently went through a process of (willful?) appropriations

47 See Oikonomopoulou (2011).

48 See Kennedy (2003). See also Libanius' exercises in rhetorical prowess and, for the Latin counterparts, Seneca Maior's *suasoriae* and *controversiae*, and (Pseudo-)Quintilian's various exercises.

49 See Kraus (2011).

to the point where, if Malcolm Heath is right, this theory became a practical tool for the rhetorician rather than an analytical tool with a thorough theoretical underpinning.[50]

That it is hard to set the field of rhetoric apart from that of the Second Sophistic may already be evident from the fact that many of the typical sophistic declamations seem to have been developed from the traditional exercises that were used in the rhetorical schools.[51] Travelling sophists also presented themselves as teachers in rhetorical skill and cultural knowledge, thus negotiating for themselves a place on the market of eloquence. Apart from viewing sophistic declamations as an end in itself, they can also be regarded as a means to advertise a sophist's talent and to persuade youngsters from the audience to study with him.[52]

The close connection between the field of sophistry and that of rhetoric is also illustrated by the conflation of meaning of the terms denoting the representatives of each respective field. In the original meaning of the terms, a *rhêtôr* was seen as a rhetorical *performer*, while a sophist was rather concerned with the *teaching* of rhetoric.[53] By Imperial times, however, and especially in Philostratus' definition,[54] a sophist is no longer primarily associated with teaching, but with grand verbal performances as described earlier, while the term *rhêtôr* could be used for a rhetorical teacher as well as a rhetorical practitioner. Moreover, it appears from epigraphic sources that it was well possible to carry both titles at the same time.[55]

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50 See Heath (1994).

51 For a good overview of sophistic declamation, see Russell (1983).

52 Cf. Korenjak (2000), 25.

53 See Rothe (1989), 11–12, with relevant bibliography.

54 Phil. *VS*. 484.

55 See, again, Rothe (1989), 12, n. 76; and Puech (2002). While this implies that both pursuits could coexist in individuals, I disagree with Kasulke (2005) that there was no longer a conflict between rhetoric and philosophy in the Imperial era. Discursively speaking, as we will see, individual authors still position themselves *vis-à-vis* their peers according to the dichotomy between sophists and philosophers. That rhetoric could coexist with philosophy is not an accepted fact, but a discursive position that must be defended time and again against intellectual competitors. The mere existence of philosopher-orators only indicates that some individuals managed to present themselves successfully as pursuers of both professions, not that the historical conflict had been entirely put to rest. Horst's ((2013), 133 n. 122) argument, that Fronto's and Herodes Atticus' 'rhetorical' attacks on philosophy ought to be regarded as authorial self-aggrandization and do not testify to a real 'existential' conflict between philosophy and rhetoric, starts from an essentialist view on these terms that I cannot accept. When was the history of philosophy and rhetoric

While the field of sophistry is intimately associated with Greek cultural heritage, rhetoric can be considered as much a Roman as a Greek practice. Indeed, Latin rhetorical education was also flourishing from Republican times onwards, and great Imperial teachers of Latin rhetoric such as Quintilian, the first-century writer of an enormously influential *Handbook*, or Fronto, the second-century linguistic archaist and teacher of the Emperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, prove how rhetorical education was not confined to Greek authorities, but also strongly advocated the correct and persuasive use of the Latin language.[56]

As we will see in the analyses of individual authors, rhetoric appears to be a floating term in the debate between sophists and philosophers, and this in two different ways.[57] On the one hand, there are arguments concerning what qualifies as rhetoric and what does not. As we will see, some philosophers quite confidently downplay the role of rhetoric for their own self-presentation, denying any adherence to traditional rhetorical schooling and emphasizing their concerns with the truth instead of the dynamics of verbal persuasion. On the other hand, amongst those figures who do recognize the rhetorical character of philosophical discourse, there is a huge debate regarding the extent to which rhetoric is allowed to be part of the philosophical system.

2.4 *Dynamism*

As may become clear from the overview above, the division between these three fields is far from obvious, and many overlaps seem to occur. If it were the case that all self-proclaimed philosophers, for instance, valued independent thinking higher than knowledge of traditional authorities, and that all sophists merely reproduced what they found in their ancient books, we would no longer have to hesitate as to who should be regarded as a sophist and who as a philosopher. Unfortunately for the analyst, such clear-cut criteria are largely absent, since the individual appropriations of the conflict between rhetoric,

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ever free from personal mediations? Why would Plato's *Gorgias* testify to a deep conflict, while the invectives of Imperial authors are only superficial concerns with the proper self-positioning?

56 For the difference between Latin and Greek in rhetorical practice and education, see Quint. 12.10.27–39. Fronto is best known for his correspondence with high-class citizens and the aforementioned Emperors. See, for an illustration of the interest in the (ancient) Latin language, also Aulus Gellius' *Attic nights*, which also illustrates the intimate personal connections between 'Roman' and 'Greek' intellectuals such as Fronto, Sulpicius Apollinaris, Favorinus, and Herodes Atticus.

57 See Dorandi (2003).

sophistry, and philosophy prevent any stable image of these fields from emerging. Furthermore, there are also some striking resemblances that all of these fields seem to share, in that they all display an interest in traditional philosophical literature and the tendency to ground one's ideas and viewpoints in traditional authoritative texts and persons. Moreover, if we look at a number of historical data, it soon becomes clear that the Roman Empire did not know an absolute distinction between rhetoric and philosophy, and not even between sophistry and philosophy.

As we have seen, the field of sophistic display and that of philosophical display are both part of a wider cultural system in which *paideia* was of major importance. *Paideia* can best be understood as the education in an amalgam of cultural values and capacities that were regarded as heritage from the Greek classical age.[58] Typical aspects of this *Bildung* were rhetorical training and knowledge of Greek poetry, philosophy and history. Revering the achievements of their ancestors, the Greeks of the Imperial age took much pride in their cultural heritage, and felt that this knowledge had to be passed on to subsequent generations in the form of cultured education.

Since there was no precise definition as to what the actual aspects of *paideia* were, the field of traditional Greek education could be claimed by a wide variety of self-proclaimed instructors. The 'schools' that taught all these components were often not (entirely) institutionalized. Consequently, tutorship was open to private initiative, and it was often up to the teachers themselves to demonstrate and advertise the social relevance of the educational paradigm for which they stood.[59] Since *paideia* comprised such a broad field of knowledge that was supposed to be mastered entirely by the ideal *pepaideumenos*, we can see how, in practice, the very notion of general *paideia* narrows the gap between the fields of philosophy and that of sophistry. On the one hand, many self-styled philosophers such as Plutarch or Arrian obviously enjoyed a rhetorical education as well, which may appear from the quality and variety of their literary production (cf. *infra*). On the other, people like Aelius Aristides, who is usually situated in the field of sophistic display, could not afford to neglect the field of philosophy, for such a lack of commitment to a major component of Greek *paideia* could harm their image of the fully accomplished *pepaideumenos*.

A number of historical data strongly suggest that many people did not feel themselves compelled to make an absolute choice between the life of sophis-

58 For the diverse aspects of *paideia*, see the collection of papers in Borg (ed.) (2004).

59 See Lauwers (2009b), 594 with bibliography in footnotes 8 and 9. Add to this the instructive study by Cribiore (2001). Because of her extensive overview of every stage in ancient education, I will here not go into detail concerning the content of the earlier stages.

ticated *paideia* and the love of wisdom as embodied in the very term *philosophia*. We have already argued how, in the post-Platonic Academy and the Aristotelian school, it was conceived as thoroughly philosophical to debate philosophical dilemmas in a rhetorical fashion, in which the principle of persuasion was cherished as an important criterion. In other contexts as well, it was customary that philosophers addressed audiences in a public speech about a general philosophical problem, which was called a *thesis* or a *quaestio infinita*.[60] Quite interestingly, the Roman teacher of rhetoric, Quintilian, recommends the treatment of such *quaestiones infinitae* as a part of the training of a youngster with rhetorical ambitions as well.[61] As appears from the collections of *progymnasmata* which we still have from this period, moreover, the *thesis* was a widely used training device not just for some philosophers, but also for aspiring Greek and Roman rhetoricians.

Other elements of rhetorical schooling obviously point to the inherent importance of the philosophical tradition for the training of good rhetoricians. Not only Quintilian's famous overview of philosophical works (with an attack on Seneca's style) in the tenth book of his *Handbook* should be mentioned, but also the fact that the collections of *progymnasmata* for the young rhetoricians-to-be consisted, among other things, of the use of *gnomai* and *chreiai* (or, respectively, sayings of and anecdotes about wise men, not seldom philosophers). Aelius Theon, the author of a collection of preliminary rhetorical exercises, points to the double benefit of the use of *chreiai* because it "not only creates a certain faculty of speech but also good character while we are being exercised in the moral sayings of the wise."[62] Although the formation of good character is here also recognized as an important reason for using *chreiai* in education, it is still somewhat of a beneficial side effect, rather than an end in itself. We here witness a general tendency in the rhetorical educational literature of this period to use ancient philosophical literature in order to give pupils good stylistic and formal guidance. Another good example of this can be found in Quintilian, who advises his pupils to read Plato in order to master Socrates' clever methods of interrogation and apply these when one has to interrogate a witness in court.[63]

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60 I will talk more about the *thesis* in relation to the term *dialexis* in the next chapter about Maximus of Tyre.

61 See Quint. 3.5.5–12.

62 Theon. *Progymn.* 60. The English translation is from Kennedy (2003), 14. On the *chreia* in general, see Hock—O'Neil (2002).

63 Quint. 5.7.28.

This tendency also appears from the treatises which are generally discussed in overviews of ancient literary criticism, which should not surprise us that much, given the great literary quality of classical philosophical literature. Pseudo-Demetrius' *On style*, Dionysius of Halicarnassus' broad critical oeuvre, and Pseudo-Longinus' *On the sublime* all testify to these authors' attempts to instruct aspiring rhetoricians and *literati* on the basis of imitation and emulation of the great classics, among them also Plato, Xenophon, and many other philosophers. In their judgement, these literary critics could castigate or praise such philosophers largely on the basis of their stylistic merits (even though Longinus would probably claim that a division between words and thoughts is virtually impossible). Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who lived in the first century BCE, does not shy away from criticizing Plato on stylistic grounds, giving preference to Demosthenes instead,[64] even though he elsewhere praises Plato along with Democritus and Aristotle as philosophers who adopt a good 'mean' in their style that is only inferior to the great Homer.[65] Furthermore, Dionysius shows that philosophical and stylistic value scales do not necessarily coincide, when he praises the Stoic philosopher Chrysippus' contribution to logical thinking, but castigates his lack of stylistic and rhetorical talent.[66] Another example of the conflation of rhetoric and philosophy can be found in the thirty-second chapter of Pseudo-Longinus' *On the sublime*, which is concerned with metaphor, and contains references to Aristotle, Theophrastus, Xenophon, and Plato. Longinus even proves himself an ardent defender of Plato's use of metaphors, contesting the views of his *adversaire préféré* Caecilius, who appears to have loved Lysias and hated Plato.

So much for the role of philosophy in rhetorical education. When we look at the field of philosophy, the use of distinctive styles of speaking seemed to have been welcomed by particular schools and individuals. Philosophical invective, which I previously linked to the Cynical tradition, remained in vogue in the Roman Empire, even to the extent that this style was also used by Stoics such as Musonius Rufus and his pupil Epictetus to convey their inspiring philosophical message. This protreptic way of preaching also seems to have exerted a considerable influence on the style of many early Christian speakers

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64 See D.H. *Dem.*, *passim*, and the fairly long self-apology for his critique on Plato in the first two chapters of his letter to Pompeius. On Plato's popularity in intellectual circles, see de Lacy (1974).

65 D.H. *Comp.Verb.* 24. In the case of Aristotle, probably his no-longer-extant dialogues are meant. Notice also that the very concept of the 'mean' (*to meson*) in style is probably inspired by Aristotelian ethical concepts.

66 D.H. *Comp.Verb.* 4.

who wanted to convince others to abandon pagan religion and turn to the new faith as the ultimate truth.[67] Even though this verbal style sets itself apart from the traditional rhetorical schooling, it undeniably makes use of self-conscious rhetorical methods to persuade the audience of the philosophical message in question.

When it comes to more conventional rhetorical methods, there appears to have been a class of philosophers who saw no problem in combining the practice of philosophy and teachings in rhetoric. We already encountered the case of Aristotle, but the practice of the philosophical teaching of rhetoric was not confined to the Peripatetic school. Rhetoric was also practised in post-classical generations of the Sceptical Academy, with prominent figures such as Philo of Larissa and Antiochus of Ascalon, who exerted considerable influence on the famous orator Cicero.[68] The first-century (BCE) Epicurean Philodemus wrote a treatise about rhetoric, which has come down to us in fragmentary form in the book rolls of Herculaneum. The first-century (CE) Stoic Annaeus Cornutus published works on several aspects of rhetorical theory and practice. All of these people, and many more, showed this obvious interest in rhetoric, apparently without compromising their conspicuous position as philosophers.

In the same vein, as Bernadette Puech has recorded, there are some inscriptions honouring Imperial intellectuals for simultaneously being a *rhêtôr* and a *philosophos*, as is illustrated by the case of Titus Flavius Glaucus of Marathon, who represents himself on an Athenian inscription as a 'ποιητὴς καὶ ῥήτωρ καὶ φιλόσοφος' (poet, orator, and philosopher).[69] It was also possible to be honoured for simultaneously being a *rhêtôr* and a *sophistês*, as appears from, for example, a statue in Milet from the second century CE, in which T. Claudius Flavianus Dionysios was honoured by the council and labelled as 'τὸν ῥήτορα καὶ σοφι-

67 Some of these preachers, such as the third-century Church father Origen, have aimed to embrace elements of pagan philosophy in their treatment of Christian religion, while the second-century polemicist Tatian launched a more straightforward attack on the foundation of pagan philosophy and religion, presenting himself provocatively as a barbarian. For earlier examples of the interactions between Judaeo-Christian belief and Hellenistic culture, see Winter (1997) and, specifically for the Stoic and Cynical influence on the early Jews and Christians, see Engberg-Pedersen (2000).

68 In Plutarch's *Life of Cicero* (4.1), Plutarch narrates that Cicero was captured by the fluency and the grace of Antiochus' words, which implies that there was an obvious rhetorical component in his speeches and teachings.

69 See Puech (2002), 271. The title of 'philosopher' in an epigraphic honorary context is discussed in Hahn (1989), 159–164.

στήν' (the orator and sophist).[70] This demonstrates that neither the opposition between rhetoric and philosophy nor the one between rhetoric and sophistry was perceived as absolute, for this would impede the shared public attribution of these two professions to one and the same person. Why the laudatory terms *philosophos* and *sophistês* do not occur together is a question that I will address in the next section.

In social gatherings such as symposia, scholarly discussions about language and rhetoric seem to have been flanked quite naturally by questions of a more inquisitive philosophical nature.[71] According to the narrations in Plutarch's *Table talk*, Aulus Gellius' *Attic nights*, and Athenaeus' *Dinner of the sophists*, grammarians shared the table with politicians, physicians, philosophers, sophists, and rhetoricians, in search for interesting topics to spice up the meal. It may thus be clear that neither philosophers nor sophists operated in an intellectual vacuum; rather, there was a vivid interaction between these groups that extended beyond the public forum to the private dinner table. These symposia were not simply an agreeable pastime for the participants, but also a way to impress others with their knowledge of the tradition, or their cunning speculations about natural phenomena or cultural customs.[72] Thus, underneath the benevolent and humane atmosphere at a dinner table, participants must have felt some pressure as to how they should prove themselves to be well-educated members of the elite, and philosophical knowledge was one of the prime ways to justify one's claim to cultural authority in such a social context. Furthermore, when people were speculating about philosophical questions in a sympotic atmosphere, to what extent could a philosopher make use of clever rhetorical techniques to persuade the party, without being seen as a verbose sophist? In order to hold one's own in such learned table talk, an elementary foundation of rhetorical talent could be handy for any participant, philosopher or other.

Even though the aforementioned data strongly suggest that any strict division between the fields of rhetoric, sophistry, and philosophy is bound to end in a reduction of the historical reality, probably the most troubling aspect is the fact that many individual self-presentations of the intellectuals of this era dif-

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70 See Puech (2002), 229.

71 For the importance of symposia in the cultural life of the Imperial elite, and for the role of philosophy in these gatherings, see the collection of essays in Klotz—Oikonomopoulou (eds.) (2011).

72 See, e.g., on the Plutarchan symposium, König (2007), 46: "The work demonstrates (…) how processes of universally relevant philosophical enquiry can start from frivolous snatches of conversation." For the anxiety of social intercourse, see Goldhill (2009), 106.

fer significantly from the picture sketched in a lot of scholarly publications. As Graham Stanton has aptly observed,[73] quite a large number of Imperial intellectuals who were always intuitively perceived as sophists actually represent *themselves* as philosophers, and look down on their 'sophistic' contemporaries. Moreover, the scholarly invention of an intermediary category for so-called *Halbphilosophen*, among whom people like Dio Chrysostom, Favorinus, and Maximus of Tyre are generally reckoned,[74] does not rely on their actual historical self-representations, and thus offers a distorted view of the discursive reality of this period—as if these intellectuals' self-representation ought to be taken less seriously than that of a Plutarch or an Epictetus. By defining whose self-representation is to be taken at face value and whose is a mere authorial pose, many studies of ancient philosophy in the Roman Empire reinforce a normative image that is partly a projection of our modern conceptions. This is not a bad thing *per se*—after all, as long as scholars are open about their own criteria to distinguish between philosophers and sophists, this can bring about an intercultural dialogue with ancient conceptions. However, if we really want to know all the diverse faces of philosophy in the Roman Empire, we also have to take into account the remarkable dynamism with which the authority of the field of philosophy is appropriated in other domains that modern interpreters generally do not associate with philosophical pursuits. Finally, in order to round out the discursive mapping of this period, we can confront some authors' self-presentations with the estimation of them by their contemporaries (for as far as the sources allow us to), and take the discrepancies between these portraits as the basis for a destabilization of the definition of philosophy, rhetoric, and sophistry.

The last decades have witnessed an impressive amount of studies that, each in their own respect, investigate the boundaries between and the definitions of these fields. Johannes Hahn convincingly argued that the status of a philosopher presupposed a distinctive sort of self-presentation, and that an audience to a certain extent knew when it was watching a philosopher. However, in his zeal to set sophists apart from philosophers, he finds himself at times in the awkward position of having to make some decisions for himself, instead of basing his judgement on the authors' own self-presentations.[75] Thomas Schmitz'

73 See Stanton (1973).

74 See, e.g., Brancacci (1985), 11.

75 Cf. his treatment of Maximus of Tyre (Hahn (1989), 96), whom he labels a sophist after all, despite the latter's self-representation. See also my discussion of the scholarly reception of Maximus, and how this leads to an unfair treatment of his case.

rather brief discussion of the field of philosophy in the world of the Second Sophistic makes a claim for a more dynamic view of the historical reality, in which the obvious overlaps between the rhetorical show culture of this era and the exertion of philosophical authority may become more apparent.[76] In his study of Imperial Greek literature and the politics of imitation, Tim Whitmarsh shows how authors like Favorinus and Dio adopt very self-conscious strategies in fashioning themselves according to philosophical *topoi*, such as exile.[77] Michael Trapp devotes a conspicuous part of his overview of Imperial philosophy to the contacts between philosophy and what he defines as 'the mainstream'.[78] It is, above all, in this section, as well as in his broad choice of sources (not only technical school philosophers), that he shows the versatile nature of Imperial philosophy and its interactions with wider social institutions and phenomena. Harry Sidebottom offers an interesting discussion of the symbolic role of the philosopher and the sophist.[79] However, although he aptly observes that a sophist's outward appearance can be very much like that of a philosopher in this era, his attempt to attribute a distinguished role for both parties already implies that there is only little conceptual space for figures that aspire to both roles. Finally, in her fairly recent book about Plutarch's practical ethics, Lieve Van Hoof shows how Plutarch deploys a series of cunning rhetorical devices to attract a number of influential social figures to philosophical guidance.[80] She argues that part of the seductiveness of Plutarch's paradigm of philosophy lies in his representation of philosophy as a pursuit that is well in line with the ambitious expectations of the well-to-do.

While the list above does not aim at an integral overview of all previous discussions of this topic, it already illustrates the great care with which scholars have tried to determine the interactions between philosophy and society. Nevertheless, to my mind, the precise interaction between philosophy and rhetoric is as yet not fully discussed. In what follows, it is worthwhile to take a closer look at Stanton's problems with classifying Imperial intellectuals as either sophists or philosophers, and I will suggest my own explanation as to why it is so difficult to set these two classes apart. However, before discussing individual authors in this context, we will devote some words to the methodological approach that inspires the subsequent analyses.

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76 Schmitz (1997), 86–89.

77 See Whitmarsh (2001), 133–180.

78 Trapp (2007a), esp. 226–257.

79 Cf. Sidebottom (2009).

80 Van Hoof (2010).

3 A Functionalist Approach[81]

Thus far, we have seen how in the Imperial era (as in many other periods) it is hard to draw a clear line between what could count as sophistry and what as philosophy. This is not due to the fact that the authors of our sources do not make a clear distinction for themselves, but to the fact that they do not do so univocally and that our own modern assumptions concerning philosophy do not entirely correspond to the dynamic manner in which the title of philosopher used to be claimed in the Roman Empire.

In order to respect the individuality of each single author from the Imperial period, we propose an interpretative framework that is inspired by systemic and discursive theory. Systemic theory postulates that society can be interpreted as an amalgam of interacting systems that set themselves apart from other systems through their use of a different "repertoire" (understood as the values, norms, and tenets of a certain system).[82] The aim of a systemic approach is to adopt a descriptive rather than a normative image of the historical reality, and to stress the continuous dynamism of systems and the ways in which they were defined as a result of their constant interaction with each other.

In this concrete context, we hypothesize that the obvious complications in classifying sophists and philosophers in the Roman Empire can largely be explained by postulating that within the boundaries of the larger cultural system there are (at least) two different systems at work, which distinguish themselves from each other through their use of a different repertoire. On the one hand, there is the socio-political 'sophistic' system, in which the profession of sophist is regarded as an honourable pursuit that brings about conspicuous social prestige (cf. *supra*). On the other, there is the intellectual-'philosophical' system, in which the discursive influence of Plato and other philosophical authorities is conspicuously felt. Inspired by these traditional authors, many self-proclaimed philosophers in the Roman Empire affirm their own philosophical identity by opposing themselves to some fallacious and insincere thinkers whom they label as sophists.

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81 The methodological framework introduced here is also discussed more extensively in Lauwers (2013), 334–340, with a reading of Philostratus, Epictetus, and Aelius Aristides. In the following paragraph, I will apply this framework to a number of other Imperial authors as well.

82 One may find good introductions to systemic theory in the systemic sociology of Luhmann (1984), the radically constructivistic approach of Schmidt (1985), and the polysystem theory of Even-Zohar (1990).

An obvious consequence of the co-existence of two discursive frameworks is that the label sophist can both be used as an honorary and as a deprecatory term, depending on the user who passes the judgement. As we will see, the use of these terms functions in a context where authorial self-representation and self-authorization are never off the agenda. Commitment to or rejection of a certain system thus comes with the acceptance or dismissal of this system's particular repertoire. As Dirk De Geest has argued in his application of systemic theory in the literary field, the antagonisms which lead to the eventual opposition between two systems (and thus to the identity of each of these two systems) can be described in a discursive framework, for a system's self-definition always happens by discursively contrasting its own repertoire to that of other systems.[83] Discourse, understood in its Foucauldian sense as a mechanism for power negotiation, is thus the prime device that governs the dynamics of inclusion in and exclusion from a system's territory.

More concretely, when we look at individual texts, we may expect them to draw discursive lines between what counts as sophistic and what as philosophical, and to articulate to what extent it is possible to strike the middle ground between both terms. As we will see, in the socio-political or sophistic system, there was no real problem with combining sophistic practices, such as grand speech delivery, with knowledge of and devotion to philosophical authorities. In the intellectual-philosophical system, however, where the term sophist is associated with a philosopher *manqué*, people are essentially forced to oppose themselves to sophistic practices in order to have a chance of being regarded as a philosopher.

As a result of its dynamic nature, this framework can allow us to interpret 'sophistic' texts alongside 'philosophical' texts, and compare how they negotiate the meaning of these terms in relation to the individual authors' aims and beliefs. Moreover, since it is postulated that, from a rhetorical perspective, a person who wants to present himself as a member of a system must to a certain extent establish a rapport between his own practice and (his discursive representation of) the system's repertoire, this framework also allows us to address the versatile ways in which the traditional quarrels between philosophy and sophistry are represented, interpreted, and given shape in the concrete historical situation of the High Roman Empire. As a result, we will witness how the unstable use of the terms sophist and philosopher does not suddenly pop

83 See De Geest (1996), which is unfortunately only published in Dutch. A succinct English overview of De Geest's viewpoints is provided in De Geest (2003).

up out of nowhere, but is, as it were, framed and predetermined by the ambiguities surrounding the division between both fields from their very origins onwards.

4 Individual Authors

The remainder of this chapter will be devoted to a discussion of individual authors, who each in their own way deal with the traditional conflict between sophistry, rhetoric, and philosophy. As we have seen, this overview contains not only figures who are traditionally seen as philosophers, but also figures who are commonly situated on the sophistic side of the dispute. In the discussion of these people, we will take into account their general position in this debate on the basis of what we know about their lives and on the basis of their entire literary production.[84]

All twelve authors who will be discussed here range from the second half of the first century CE to the beginning of the third century CE. For reasons of clarity, we will start off with Philostratus, the author of the *Lives of the sophists*, since these biographies give us a general picture of the sophistic world during the first two centuries CE, and offer a representation of the historical reality that can subsequently be verified on the basis of some Imperial sophists' and philosophers' *ipsissima verba*. After that, the criterion of chronology will inform the order of the authors discussed. There are two good reasons for doing so. Firstly, there is the practical argument that many of these authors were acquainted with their contemporaries, and that we are likely to find interpersonal connections between these figures. Keeping people from roughly the same era closely together allows for a better assessment of the intellectual similarities or oppositions that co-existed in the culture of the High Empire.

Secondly, a more thematic discussion of these authors, treating the traditional philosophers as one group and the traditional sophists as another, would already impose an intuitive judgement upon them, and not start from their own self-representations. Using a chronological rather than a thematic order may cause interesting and surprising juxtapositions of viewpoints that have figured

84 In order to keep the focus on the points of comparison between these figures, the analyses presented here are less extensively explicated than the three case studies in Lauwers (2013), where a single work or part of a work is analysed for more than five pages; however, the analyses in this chapter are the result of the same methodological framework and the same discursive way of reading.

prominently in roughly the same cultural environment. If the methodology I advocated above really enables us to read 'sophistic' and 'philosophical' texts alongside one another and to bring out the versatile and dynamic nature of our sources, it should be able to pass the test of relative randomness as regards the respective thematic and discursive framework of each individual author.

The discussion below is the result of a personal interpretation of the discursive position of these authors, yet the massive amount of work that has already been done by others is of course gratefully acknowledged. In the case of some intellectuals, such as Plutarch or Lucian, the dynamics of rhetoric, sophistry, and philosophy have already been amply discussed in secondary literature, but not always with the same discursive framework in mind. The main virtue of the juxtaposition of these figures and the discussion of the subtleties displayed by each in dealing with the conflict between sophistry and philosophy is the understanding that an essentializing account of what 'philosophy' and 'sophistry' in the Roman Empire actually were is bound to end in a reduction of the resourceful apologetic discourses of these individuals. It also becomes apparent how these figures are intertwined in an interpersonal and institutional network that no doubt brought about mutual influences, and how, despite their differences, we can witness the emergence of some general tendencies that we may tentatively associate with the general 'poetics' of this culture, to which the final pages of this chapter will be devoted. In order to interpret Maximus in a way that does justice to this author, it is crucial to see that the sources that give insight into the intellectual discussions of this period, even while presenting themselves as offering an objective definition of philosophy, sophistry, and rhetoric, remain thoroughly *discursive* documents in an age of much contestation and verbal competition.

4.1 *Lucius Flavius Philostratus (ca. 170–ca. 250 CE)*

Philostratus was a successful sophist who managed to enter the circle around Julia Domna, wife of the Emperor Septimius Severus and notable patroness of a number of talented intellectuals.[85] Apart from his *Lives of the sophists*, he also wrote the *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, *Gymnasticus*, *Heroicus*, *Imagines*, and some letters. He is also possibly the author of a dialogue *Nero*, transmitted in the Lucianic corpus, and two rhetorical discourses.[86]

85 A biographical discussion of Philostratus is offered in Bowie (2009).

86 For an overview of the literary output of Philostratus, see Elsner (2009) with relevant bibliography.

Lives of the sophists is one of the (if not *the*) most important source(s) for the cultural phenomenon which Philostratus himself described as the Second Sophistic. In the work, Philostratus shares a large number of anecdotes and stylistic comments about the most important sophists of the two preceding centuries. The biographies are dedicated to one of the Gordians,[87] who is described by Philostratus as a relative of the famous second-century sophist Herodes Atticus, who receives special attention in the work.[88] Philostratus thus evidently tends to offer a glorifying description of individual sophists' lives.[89]

To this end, Philostratus displays two notable tendencies in the introduction to his work (480–484): on the one hand, he aims to show that the Second Sophistic is well in line with the First Sophistic movement, and is thus also firmly anchored in the ancient Greek tradition; on the other, he tries to explain away the negative connotations of sophistry in classical literature, thus portraying sophistry as a worthy alternative to philosophy.[90]

Even though he does not consider them as sophists *pur sang*, Philostratus' overview also makes room for philosophers who managed to articulate their philosophical doctrines with ease and fluency (484). In other words, his defence of the sophistic art does not take on the form of a condemnation of philosophy; rather, he takes eloquence as a guiding principle to decide who counts as a sophist and who does not, and also includes and praises those philosophers who are capable of adding a rhetorical dimension to the exposition of their doctrines. This illustrates the remarkable tolerance from the sophistic system towards that of philosophy. However, it should be noted that philosophy is not *necessary* for a speaker to become an accomplished sophist, as the largest part of the sophistic biographies illustrates.[91]

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87 It is not certain which Gordian is Philostratus' addressee. Both Gordian I and Gordian II have had their advocates in scholarly publications. For a good overview, see the second appendix in Anderson (1986), 297–298 (with relevant bibliography). Quite recently, Jones (2002b) has convincingly suggested that the addressee may be Gordian III.

88 See Phil. *VS*. 479–480.

89 Schmitz (2009) convincingly demonstrates how the biographies themselves are examples of sophistic technique, and how Philostratus presents himself as a radical insider in the sophistic world.

90 See Lauwers (2013), 340–345 for a more extensive analysis of this introduction, with relevant bibliography.

91 This interpretation opposes itself to Brancacci's reading of Philostratus' text as putting forward the combination of philosophy and rhetoric as a cultural ideal (see Brancacci (1985), 86–92). I agree with Flinterman (1995), 30–31, that Brancacci's interpretation misses the point of Philostratus' focus on sophistry as a full-blown intellectual pursuit, even if *not* combined with philosophy.

An attempt to mitigate the conflict between sophistry and philosophy can also be found in Philostratus' famous seventy-third letter to Julia Domna. In the beginning of the letter, Philostratus maintains that Plato did not hate the sophists as much as he admired them.[92] Through this interpretation of the historical conflict between Plato and the sophists, Philostratus aims to argue that those contemporary philosophers who look down upon sophistry are in fact not as much in line with their great predecessor Plato as they would like to think. Indeed, near the end of the letter, Philostratus asks Julia Domna to urge Plutarch[93] not to be so hard on the sophists. Again, as in the *Lives of the sophists*, it is not hard to see why Philostratus aims to rectify Plato's authoritative condemnation of the sophists and Imperial followers of this condemnation like Plutarch.[94] In his attempt to purge Gorgias' (and thereby also his own) profession from the negative connotation that is traditionally attached to it, he does not so much question Plato's authority as he tries to argue that Plato has been misunderstood and was in fact not as hostile towards the sophists as the members of the philosophical system tend to believe.

Philostratus thus forms a notable exception to the general rule that we will encounter in the subsequent authors, in that he takes on the defence of the socio-political or sophistic system against assaults from philosophers. As a devoted lover of the sophistic art, he does not strive for recognition within the philosophical system (as many of the other Imperial authors do), but he aims to portray sophistry as a valuable and authoritative art that may well aspire to intellectual credibility.

The exceptional discursive position of Philostratus may obviously raise some doubts regarding his reliability as a source for the reconstruction of the sophistic practices amongst the generations preceding his. After all, he has an obvious agenda in writing these biographies, and may well be tempted to increase the sophists' impact on their social world for the sake of the glorification of his own profession. In response to these doubts, it is important to point out that, as Simon Swain has argued, *Lives of the sophists* does not entirely share

92 See Jones (1971), appendix 1, for the authenticity of the letter. See also the interpretations of Penella (1979) and Flinterman (1997). For an interpretation of this letter in the light of the concept of *philotimia*, see Demoen (2012), 207–211.

93 This aspect has raised some scholarly interest, as Plutarch must have been dead for over a century at the time of the composition of the letter. What is meant is probably a lost work of his that is alluded to in Isidorus of Pelusium (*Ep.* 2.42 = Plut. Fr. 186 Sandbach).

94 Penella (1979), 165 notices the similarities between Philostratus' argument and that of Aristides in his oration *To Plato* (11). However, for Aristides, as we will see, sophistry is not so much at stake as rhetoric. Cf. Penella's own remark at Penella (1979), 166.

the eulogistic tone of Philostratus' famous *Life of Apollonius*, to be discussed below.[95] In opposition to the fantastic episodes in the *Life of Apollonius*, *Lives of the sophists* does not contain superhuman events, and the characters in Philostratus' sophistic biographies are rather depicted as extremely talented human beings who have their own moral flaws and experience some adverse circumstances, just as in real life. Consequently, we can at least be more assured of Philostratus' *intention* to provide his reader with a more or less historically correct account of the sophists under consideration, which also appears from the compatibility between Philostratus' biographies and what we know from other sources. Philostratus' narration is backed up by epigraphic sources that testify to the wide dissemination of sophists in the Greek part of the Roman Empire, and to their actual fame in their local communities. It is thus certainly not the case that Philostratus invented the entire manifestation of sophistic display in the Roman Empire, even though he may have strategically exaggerated the socio-political importance of these sophists.[96] Moreover, from other biographies, anecdotal works, and *ipsissima verba*, we appear to get a good image of several of the most prominent intellectuals of the first two centuries CE, and the narrations about them as well as their proper self-representation seem to legitimize Philostratus' picture of the period, at least to a certain extent. If what Philostratus tells us is an overblown fiction, it is at least a fiction that many of the sophists figuring in it would have loved their contemporary audience to believe, even though most of them—as far as we know them—would bear the title of sophist with less pride than Philostratus seems to suggest.

The *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* is Philostratus' longest biography, spread out over eight books and narrating the life events of the Pythagorean philosopher Apollonius, who lived in the first century CE. While the historical Apollonius was quite likely to be revered as a wise philosopher *pur sang*, Philostratus' Apollonius is an ambiguous figure balancing between sophistry and philosophy, whose pagan religious devotion also places him amongst the so-called holy men of his day.[97] Even though he condemns the rhetorical and literary abuses

95 See Swain (1991), esp. 150. However, this does not imply that Philostratus did not pay some thorough attention to the narrative of these biographies, along with their arrangement. For a tantalizing suggestion as regards a Homeric intertext for the *Lives of the sophists*, see Bowie (2006), 148–149.

96 The debate about the political and historical relevance of the Second Sophistic movement has been repeated in modern scholarship in the historical study of Bowersock (1969) and the more literary focus of Bowie (1982).

97 See Anderson (1994), *passim*.

of his contemporaries,[98] this Philostratean Apollonius appears to have pulled off some stunning rhetorical and other tricks himself, with the self-defence and magical act in front of the Emperor Domitian as his most impressive *coup de théâtre*.[99] In a literary biography that reaches a high degree of self-reflexivity,[100] Philostratus thus seems to appropriate the popular philosopher's life in order to stage him as a shining example for philosophers and sophists alike. In the process, the verbose expositions with which Philostratus himself must have entertained his audiences are authorized by the similarities between his sophistic speeches and Apollonius' public orations. The *Life of Apollonius* thus forms a stout masterpiece of a stout defender of the art of sophistry. It is a life of a philosopher,[101] but it is undeniably a proud sophist who holds the pen.

All in all, Philostratus' reflection on the field of sophistry and philosophy is, at least for the literary sources of his era, quite peculiar, in that it glorifies sophistry and deals with philosophy in order to authorize the sophistic practice rather than to depict it as a true end in itself. Without his influential works, we may have been much less ready to accept the overall importance of the Second Sophistic as a cultural phenomenon in the Roman Empire. As will appear from the discussions of some important Imperial authors below, there is an obvious gap between the way in which Philostratus praises them for being sophists and the way in which they wanted themselves to be seen in their own literary works. In this respect, Philostratus shows us just how widely the discursive representations of the Imperial period by Imperial authors can diverge from one another.

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98 See, e.g., Phil. *VA*. 1.7; 1.14; 1.17; 3.36. At 5.40, Apollonius criticizes Dio for speaking too rhetorically and in a manner that is too much directed towards giving pleasure. However, if Penella (1979), 166–168 is right, the friendship that nevertheless existed between Dio and Apollonius may be taken as symbolic for the synergy between rhetorical splendour and philosophical truthfulness.

99 Phil. *VA*. book 7. A good overview of political ideas in Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius* is Flinterman (1995), 128–230.

100 For the self-conscious literary strategies in this biography, see the doctoral dissertation by Knoles (1981), the extensive analysis in Schirren (2005), and the contributions in Demoen—Praet (eds.) (2009).

101 If the letters of Apollonius are indeed authentic, they give us a more direct access to the historical figure, who presents himself more consistently as a philosopher than the ambiguous protagonist of Philostratus' biography. On these letters, and on the identity of Apollonius, see Jones (2009).

4.2 *Dio of Prusa (ca. 40–after 111 CE)*

Dio of Prusa, also known as Dio Chrysostom ('Golden-Mouth') or Dio Cocceianus (his Latin cognomen), is ranked by Philostratus amongst the philosophers who exposed their doctrines so eloquently that they were labelled as sophists by their contemporaries.[102] His corpus of speeches and some external information about his life portray him as an influential intellectual, statesman in his hometown Prusa, wandering philosopher, and adviser of the Emperor(s?).[103] Throughout his work, Dio appears to have constructed an autobiographical narration that smoothly blended together the active life of an elite member of his first-century Prusean society and the outsider role of the thoughtful and counselling philosopher.[104] However, even though this interest in local politics sets him apart from the politically disinterested sophists whom we encounter in Philostratus' biographies,[105] Dio's fluent verbal style may be regarded by some—including an alleged friend of his, viz. Philostratus' Apollonius[106]—as too polished for a philosopher. On top of that, if we are to believe the fourth-century Neo-Platonic philosopher and biographer Synesius, Dio composed a speech *Against the philosophers* and *Against Musonius*, his master and one of the leading Stoic preachers of his day. It is hard to determine to what extent these assaults ought to be interpreted as plain irony,[107] but even if these speeches did and do not *per se* lead up to a condemnation of Dio on the basis of discursive inconsistencies, the carefully self-styled narration of his life seems to indicate that he was well aware of the precarious position from which he addressed his fellow citizens as an eloquent and engaged yet serious and thoughtful member of society.[108]

Under Vespasian, Dio decided to move to Rome, where he got acquainted with some influential Roman citizens.[109] Under Domitian, however, Dio appears to have been banned from his hometown (and possibly also from

102 Phil. *VS*. 486–488.

103 For a very informed overview of the most important studies about Dio, see Swain (2000), with a thorough discussion of all the relevant bibliography.

104 Trapp (2012), 120–125 speculates about how much of Dio's oeuvre is in fact edited by Dio himself, and thus how much the (order of the) texts which we still possess reveal(s) about Dio's posthumous ambitions as well.

105 Cf. Trapp (2012), 139.

106 Phil. *VA*. 5.40.

107 See Schamp (2009), 261–262.

108 Cf. Jones (1978), 55.

109 Traditionally, Dio is portrayed as a friend of the Emperors Vespasian and Titus, but there are good reasons to be sceptical about this assumption. See Sidebottom (1996).

Rome) because of his intimate connections with someone who was rising to power and was eliminated.[110] Exiled from Bithynia, he started a rather long period of wandering about. This period is crucial for Dio's self-presentation as a philosopher in the years to follow. In his speech *On exile*, the thirteenth of the Dionean corpus, he looks back on his period of exile and tells his audience how he became a wandering outcast, in the spirit of the Cynical philosophers.[111] He then narrates how he was seen by others as a wise man, and was consulted concerning important matters in life, which forced him to reflect upon them and develop some deeper insights which he brought with him to Prusa (§ 11–13). This is how he constructs his own conversion to philosophy.

It is interesting to notice how, in this entire narration, Dio does not claim the title of philosopher explicitly for himself[112]—which is always a risky thing to do, given the philosophical urge to refrain from idle boasting—but stages others to make such claims about him. He thus manages to indulge in philosophical self-aggrandizement without being accused of unphilosophical behaviour.

It remains quite unclear to what extent we should believe that there was a real conversion to philosophy during Dio's exile.[113] Synesius, for his part, seems to have believed in Dio's sincerity, maybe partly because his own (Neo-)Platonic view on the dichotomy between sophists and philosophers did not allow him to assume that it was possible for these two lifestyles to be present synchronically in the same person. Was Synesius fooled by Dio's own self-constructed narrative, and with him modern scholars such as Hans von Arnim?[114] All we can say

110 It is possible yet not certain that this man was T. Flavius Sabinus. See Sidebottom (1996), 450–451.

111 As appears from the numerous attacks against the Cynic Cynulcus throughout Athenaeus' *Dinner of the sophists* and Lucian's invectives against the Cynic Peregrinus, the Cynical movement was a popular laughing stock and enemy of many intellectuals. With his adoption of a Cynic persona, Dio seems to have provided this paradigm with some intellectual credibility. On positive notes about the Cynics, see also, e.g., Epict. 3.22, and Max. *Or.* 36.

112 Cf. Desideri (2007), 202.

113 For a suspicious view on Dio's exile and his discourse about it, see Moles (1978) and Krause (2003), esp. 30–34. See *contra* Desideri (2007), who is more willing to believe Dio's conversion during this period. The assumption that there is a more sophistic pre-exilic Dio and a more philosophical post-exilic Dio already underlies his investigations in the chronology of Dio's work in Desideri (1978). Whitmarsh (2001), 156–167 shows how the topic of exile is already established in the tradition and self-consciously adapted to Dio's own situation. See, however, the criticisms on Whitmarsh' reading of the Dionean text in Desideri (2007), 193.

114 See von Arnim (1898), who typically represents the negative view of the (Greek) culture of the Imperial time in general.

for sure is that Dio, either genuinely or strategically, considered this period a life-defining moment during which he could get rid of his sophistic cloak and adopt the humble guise of the philosopher.

When we look at Dio's oratory, it becomes apparent that his extant speeches can be divided between some civic speeches that display more worldly concerns, some literary criticisms, and discussions of a wide range of popular philosophical topics such as slavery and freedom (14–15), avarice (17), retirement (20), reputation (66), virtue (69) and many more.[115] His treatment of philosophical topics in a 'light', popularizing fashion is influenced by the Stoa,[116] which should not surprise us, since Dio was known to have studied with the Stoic Musonius Rufus. Apart from that, we also detect some clear Cynical influences in Dio's philosophy, ranging from the construction of his own exilic persona to his assessment and portrayal of the figures of Heracles, Diogenes, and, if we may believe Brancacci, Socrates as well.[117] References and figures like these give Dio's claim to practise philosophy some depth and credibility, and authorize Dio's messages and behaviour *vis-à-vis* his listeners.

Perhaps the most prominent place where Diogenes' influence on Dio is felt is in the fourth oration, a fictional dialogue on kingship between Diogenes and Alexander the Great. If John Moles is correct,[118] this speech was delivered in front of the young Emperor Trajan, which immediately highlights Dio's high social position as a self-styled philosopher advising the Emperor on what sets a good king apart from a bad one.

It is no wonder probably that Dio's four orations *On kingship*, of which the Diogenes dialogue is the last, are placed prominently at the beginning of the edition of Dio's work, as they constitute this philosophical orator's highest socio-political achievements. Dio's discourse about kingship has been interpreted as a conformist alliance with the powerful in search of intellectual prestige.[119] The suspicion that there is a distinctive self-appreciative and self-

115 For an informed treatment of Dio's most 'philosophical' works (*Or.* 54, 55, 70, 71, and 72), see the studies in Nesselrath (ed.) (2009), especially Fornaro (2009) on the distinction between real and false philosophers in Dio.

116 See already Brunt (1973).

117 See Brancacci (2000), who maintains that the Socrates of Dio's orations is thoroughly influenced by Antisthenes' Cynical representation of his master Socrates. For a more Platonic interpretation of the references to Socrates, see Trapp (2000).

118 See Moles (1983).

119 See, most notably, Desideri (1978), an interpretation of Dio that reflects the 'position (…) of an Italian Marxist intellectual' (Swain (2000), 36). Sidebottom (1996), for his part, largely refutes any assumptions regarding Dio's connections with the Flavian dynasty, but he does not exclude Dio's contact with Trajan.

advertising flair surrounding Dio's manoeuvring among the highest classes of the Roman Empire has never been entirely absent, despite his tenacious attempts to convince his audience that a philosopher like him stands far above such personal cravings. For his part, he is generally quick to oppose himself to pseudo-philosophers who are merely doing it for the outward appearance and still managing to deceive many people.[120] This self-confident rejection of superficial vainglory may well conceal an underlying fear that his knives could equally well be turned against him.

In order to witness how Dio constructs a philosophical identity through the dissimilation of his own adherence to the field of sophistry, it is worthwhile to discuss his cunning discursive strategies in the opening of the twelfth 'Olympic' oration on the image of Zeus, which was in all likelihood performed in Dio's riper years, and in which Dio self-consciously deals with the paradox that he attracts a large audience (probably even larger than most sophists of his day), even though he dissimulates his rhetorical prowess, for which at least some of the spectators, if not the largest part, came to see him.

At §5 of the Olympic oration, Dio, conscious of the performative setting in which he operates, sums up alternative spectacles which the audience can behold: orators, verse and prose writers, and, of course, sophists, who are here aptly likened to peacocks because of their colourful cloths and verbal splendour. In contrast with these peacocks, Dio compares himself to an owl, and adopts a radical Socratic persona who claims to know nothing. At §13, Dio makes plain his aversion to the sophists once again, despite acknowledging their popularity (a popularity of which he, by the way, also seems to have his share!). Finally, at §15, Dio's Socratic stance culminates in the following seemingly (but only seemingly) self-depreciatory remark:

> But notwithstanding, I declare to you that, great as is your number, you have been eager to hear a man who is neither handsome in appearance nor strong, and in age is already past his prime, one who has no disciple, who professes, I may almost say, no art or special knowledge either of the nobler or the meaner sort, no ability either as a prophet or a sophist, nay not even as an orator or as a flatterer, one who does not even have a craft deserving of praise or of interest, but who simply—wears his hear long!
>
> DIO. *Or.* 12.15; transl.: H.L. CROSBY

120 See Dio. *Or.* 49.11.

Through acts of sustained irony like these,[121] Dio cultivates an aura of a thoughtful performer who obviously sets himself apart from the common run of public speakers who used to boast of their rhetorical prowess. Yet, by showing and explicitly pointing out that a self-styled philosopher could be capable of attracting such a great crowd, his very presence in front of the audience implicitly suggests to ambitious men that devotion to philosophy—understood in the Dionean paradigm—does not deprive one of one's public voice; rather, it adds a sort of intellectual depth to one's discourse and manages to capture the attention of a distinctive part of the population. Therefore, even if Dio's own discourse seems to portray him as a humble figure surprised at his own success, young or older men in search of intellectual instruction could glance at the intent faces of their fellow listeners and be persuaded to realize their socio-cultural aspirations in the same fashion as the speaker in front of them demonstrates. The actual rhetorical situation thus adds an extra element of persuasion that the owl's ethos and paradigm is rather to be imitated than those of the self-inflated peacocks.

The persona that appears from the analysis above neatly corresponds to Dio's self-presentation in his more civic speeches. After all, Dio's ideal philosopher is a wordy and active citizen who puts his knowledge to use for the community and its individual members, and who does not refrain from displaying philosophical free speech.[122] In Dio's thought, there is thus certainly no contradiction between active citizenship and philosophy, even though philosophy requires a certain care for the self as well.[123] Indeed, throughout his career, the Prusean 'philosopher' gives advice to several cities concerning mutual concord between the ambitious cities of the East of the Roman Empire. Apart from that, we also have a number of speeches of his where he argues for a certain course of action in his home-town Prusa.[124] However, at a moment when he has the

121 For a similar strategy, see the opening lines of Dio's thirty-fifth oration and the forty-second oration, in which, at § 2, he even points out that some apparently interpret his dissimulation of rhetorical abilities as a topical form of *epideixis* (showing how hard it is to stand above suspicion of preferring appearance over sincerity).

122 See, e.g., Dio. *Or.* 32.8 sqq., where he complains about contemporaries of his who call themselves philosophers but refrain from advising people in public affairs.

123 See also his forty-forth speech, which he held to thank the community in Prusa for the signs of honour bestowed upon him, and in which he praises the Pruseans for not solely being occupied with eloquence, but also with the pursuit of wisdom (§ 10). On the notion of ambition in combination with Dio's philosophy, see Desideri (2012).

124 On these civic speeches and their socio-cultural imbedding, see the discussion in Salmeri (1982) and (2000).

opportunity to fully realize his active career as a philosopher, he is pragmatic enough to decline his candidature for an archonship in Prusa out of personal motives, but not without expressing his principled agreement with an active position for a philosopher like himself.[125] The suggestion that arises from this corpus of speeches is that of a generally revered citizen of Prusa.

Philosophy itself is the subject of Dio's seventieth, seventy-first, the seventy-second speech. The seventieth discourse is constructed as a dialogue, and may thus add to the traditional philosophical character of the text, but Dio's interlocutor proves himself a fairly weak 'opponent', merely restricting himself to general questions and giving assent to Dio's assertions. In an interesting passage (§7–8), Dio sums up in what respect the philosopher differs from the common man. He singles out aspects such as study, focus on the truth, wisdom, worshipping of the gods, clothing, table manners, and a certain way of life. Subsequently, he attacks some pseudo-philosophers in such vehement and confident wordings that it is hard to imagine that he himself was once an active citizen who aimed to convince his fellow citizens of his status as a philosopher:

> (…) whereas he who does not differ in any of these matters and is not at all unlike the world in general must not be classified as a philosopher, not even if he says he is a thousand times and makes public profession of philosophy before the popular Assembly of Athens or of Megara or in the presence of the kings of Sparta; instead, we must banish this man to the company of imposters and fools and voluptuaries.
>
> DIO. *Or.* 70.8; transl.: H.L. CROSBY

That such a pseudo-philosopher does not necessarily have a strategic plan behind his fraud becomes apparent at §10, where Dio asserts that "there is nothing to prevent one's claiming to be a philosopher and at the same time playing the imposter and deceiving himself and everybody else." Some of Dio's listeners—or later readers—may in fact be amused by his confidence in the face of his own similarity with this type of person, but his own discourse does not seem to doubt his own capability to speak with authority on philosophical topics such as this. In the seventy-first oration, Dio's main argument consists of the claim that the philosopher must excel in everything, even though it is not realistic that he is better than the craftsmen in their respective profession. However, the philosopher should know when and how to act, what is possible, and

125 See Dio. *Or.* 49.

what is the right moment. The seventy-second oration, finally, deals with Dio's personal appearance as a philosopher, which went along with a distinguished style of clothing and self-presentation. It thus appears that Dio reflected self-consciously about his 'profession', and did not shy away from communicating his insights in these domains to his audience.

Dio's influence on some of his contemporaries is quite notable. He was a master of Favorinus (cf. *infra*), who styled himself as an Academic philosopher, and Polemo of Laodicea, one of the most successful show-speakers of the second century CE. Given that Favorinus went for a different philosophical self-fashioning from Dio's[126] and that Polemo, as we know him from his physiognomical treatise[127] and his biography by Philostratus,[128] does not seem to express a great interest in philosophy, Dio's influence as a teacher was certainly not confined to the transmission of philosophical knowledge, but quite significantly seemed to pertain to rhetorical skills as well as responsible citizenship. Plutarch seems to have addressed Dio in a couple of works, but neither has survived.[129] Dio—if it is indeed him—is also mentioned twice in the diatribes of Epictetus, where he is associated with a beautiful style and successful rhetorical performances.[130] It is not clear to what extent these assessments were negative towards Dio, but, despite his own self-fashioning as a philosopher, there appears to have been little response to his actual philosophical ideas and a more straightforward focus on his civic and rhetorical role.

From then on, Dio's reception as either a philosopher or a political sophist seemed to have gone with the tide, reflecting some shifting ideas about the conceptions of rhetoric and philosophy in any given era.[131] Influenced in his turn by the Roman nobleman of the equestrian order and Stoic philosopher Musonius, he seems to have been one of the prime figures to have placed the combination of philosophical, political, and rhetorical duties on the agenda of the generations to follow, and to have cultivated a philosophical aura despite (and, in his eyes, thanks to) his active role in society.

126 In Phil. *VS*. 490, however, Favorinus speaks favourably about his teacher Dio, who encourages him in a dream to accept civic responsibilities.

127 On this work and its reception in the Arabic world, see Swain (ed.) (2007).

128 Phil. *VS*. 530–544.

129 Cf. the Lamprias catalogue of Plutarch's works, nr. 204 and 227. See Schamp (2009), 263.

130 Cf. Epict. 3.23.17 and 19.

131 See the short overview in Schamp (2009) and the extensive discussion in Brancacci (1985).

4.3 *Plutarch of Chaeronea (ca. 46–ca. 120 CE)*

One of the—if not *the*—most influential and famous intellectual(s) of this list is the Chaeronean Lucius Mestrius Plutarchus (he adopted this Roman name after gaining Roman citizenship).[132] Born to an aristocratic family, he spent most of his life in his home-town Chaeronea, a small town some twenty miles from Delphi in the region Boeotia. He led an active life, travelling around and occupying the public office of the senior interpreter of the Apollonian oracle in Delphi, and also composed a vast number of literary, historical, and philosophical works, of which an extensive part (but definitely not all of it!)[133] has been preserved. If we are to believe the *Suda*,[134] Plutarch received the consular *ornamenta* from the Emperor Trajan, which must have been an exceptional distinction for the Greek intellectual. It shows at once how much impact he must have had on his social world, which also becomes apparent through the socio-political importance of the people with whom he conversed on a friendly basis.

Around the age of twenty, Plutarch studied philosophy and mathematics at the Platonic Academy in Athens with his teacher Ammonius, who also figures several times throughout his oeuvre.[135] Scholarly consensus states that Plutarch adopted (Middle-)Platonic philosophy as his primary frame of reference.[136] Even though his discussion of Platonic doctrines betrays a distinctive dogmatic character, it has been shown that he also leans towards the more Sceptical branch of Academic philosophy, in as much as he did not regard the dogmatic and the Sceptical pole as two opposite paradigms, but rather as one singular tradition.[137] Moreover, in his philosophical self-fashioning, he does not shy away from entering polemical discussions with other doctrinal philoso-

132 Standard works about Plutarch's background and ideas include Ziegler (1951), Barrow (1967), Jones (1971), Russell (1973), Boulogne (1994), Sirinelli (2000), and Lamberton (2001).

133 The so-called Lamprias catalogue, a mutilated ancient library catalogue, gives an (albeit incomplete and spurious) idea of what we have lost in the process of transmission. Nevertheless, with Plutarch we still fare a lot better than with, e.g., Favorinus (cf. *infra*).

134 *Suda*, s.v. Plutarch.

135 Ammonius is primarily mentioned in the dialogues *E.ap.Delph.*, *Def.or.* (in both of which he is introduced as a character) and in *Quaest.conv.* (for as far as he was present at the narrated banquets).

136 *Pace* Becchi (2013) (with relevant bibliography), who leans to a more Aristotelian interpretation of Plutarch's philosophy. For a good overview of Plutarch's Platonism, see Opsomer (2007), who argues that Plutarch considered Aristotle not as a break with traditional Platonism, but rather incorporated him in the Academic school.

137 See Opsomer (1998) and Bonazzi (2003).

phies such as Stoicism[138] and Epicureanism,[139] which illustrates the thorough technical underpinning of his philosophical knowledge.

Ever since his revival in the West in Quattrocento Italy,[140] Plutarch's name has primarily been associated with his work as a historiographer of Greek and Roman parallel *Lives*. While it may seem difficult to connect this part of his oeuvre to his philosophical aspirations, various scholarly studies have shown that the *Lives* form an integral part of Plutarch's exploratory ethics.[141] By discussing and comparing the exemplary and flawed aspects of the *Lives* of illustrious men, Plutarch invites a critical reader response that is supposed to have an uplifting effect on the reader's own behaviour. In line with his Academic inclinations, Plutarch appears to have written the *Lives* with the clear purpose of sharpening the sense of critical evaluation of moral acts in his reader, which should also guide the latter's life choices into virtuous directions.

Plutarch's *Moralia*, for their part, consist of a diverse corpus of texts, written in various genres, for various audiences, with various reader responses in mind. We find traces of a versatile literary mind, capable of delivering epideictic speeches, philosophical dialogues, symposiastic literature, practical expositions, natural and cultural questions, literary and historiographical criticisms, and political treatises. Throughout this variety of literary production we can witness the emergence of a coherent thinker who displays a remarkable ability to adjust his tone to suit the situation at hand. A reconstruction of his biography on the basis of his literary works, however, does not fully enable us to estimate the extent to which he was immersed in the socio-cultural activities of the Second Sophistic. Even though it is tempting to believe that the young Plutarch went through a phase of rhetorical display only to swear it off later and become a more thoughtful and restrained intellectual, the continuity of his

138 See, most explicitly, *Sto.rep.*, *Stoic.absurd.poet.*, *Prof.virt.*, *Virt.mor.*, and *Comm.not.* See Opsomer (2013).

139 See, most conspicuously, *Ser.num.*, *Am.prol.*, *Non posse*, *Adv.Col.* and *Lat.viv.* The treatise against Colotes contains an impressively broad overview and interpretation of diverse aspects of the history of philosophy. See Kechagia (2011a).

140 See Pade (2007).

141 See the fairly early work by Erbse (1956), Wardman (1974), and Stadter (1975), and later general discussions in Lamberton (2001) and Larmour (2013). For a history of research in Plutarch's method of *synkrisis*, see Swain (1992). An important contribution to the field of Plutarch's biographical work is Pelling (2002), which also contains a discussion of Plutarch's method of comparison. On morality in Plutarch's *Lives*, see also Frazier (1996), and Duff (1999).

active engagements within the cultural climate of the Roman Empire remains obvious throughout many of his works, regardless of the time of their composition.

Graham Stanton[142] and Francesca Mestre[143] both observe that Plutarch uses the term sophist (whenever not as a 'neutral' description of the historical class of sophists and wise men) with primarily a tendency toward a negative connotation, as a deviation from proper philosophical conduct. In this respect, Plutarch's self-fashioning revolves around the same philosophical principles as those established by Plato; however, they do not betray, as Mestre seems to suggest, a lack of interest in Plutarch's own day. Rather, the Platonic framework is used time and again to keep on discrediting a group of intellectuals that appear to lay claim to the socio-cultural prestige of which Plutarch had his own share. As Thomas Schmitz has shown,[144] Plutarch's use of philosophy as a mechanism of inclusion and exclusion brings about the same socio-cultural processes of distinction that are also operative in the rhetorical world of the Second Sophistic, which makes it hard not to attribute part of Plutarch's antagonistic use of the term sophist to a self-interested pursuit of intellectual credibility within his own social climate. In particular, Plutarch's work *On listening* contains some telling passages that illustrate the blurred lines between professional show performers and philosophical lecturers, lines which Plutarch wants to sharpen again in order to make a clear distinction regarding subject, aim, and audience response.[145]

While it is thus possible to establish Plutarch's more or less consistent discursive self-presentation as an anti-sophist, he is not free from the social dynamics of his cultural climate. Implied in the topic of the right attitude while listening to philosophical lectures is the belief that such performative addresses of a youthful audience fall into the category of proper philosophical practices. It

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142 See Stanton (1973), 351–353 with a fairly broad overview of relevant passages.

143 See Mestre (1999). See also the old but still solid study by Jeuckens (1907), 47–54, who nevertheless places Plutarch on an intellectual island in the midst of his sophistic contemporaries. As I hope to show in this overview, Plutarch all but partook in the general tendencies of his socio-cultural climate.

144 See Schmitz (2012).

145 See again the analyses in Schmitz (2012). On the basis of Plutarch's treatise *On listening*, La Matina (2000) makes a strict formal distinction between rhetorical lectures and philosophical lectures. While this analysis does correspond to Plutarch's discursive distinction, it should not be seen as an objective representation of his socio-cultural context. As this overview at large aims to show, there is an indisputable element of self-fashioning that is in its turn contested by other intellectuals. Cf. also Lauwers (2008–2009).

is not entirely clear whether Plutarch actually believed rhetoric to be compatible with philosophy, but it is likely that he saw no strict opposition between them. The Lamprias catalogue mentions an unpreserved work entitled *Against those who do not do philosophy because of their activities as an orator* (*dia to rhêtoreuein*).[146] Is the implication of the title that all those who do rhetoric do not do philosophy, or that there was a group of 'deranged' people who neglected the study of philosophy because of their full devotion to rhetoric? Another work of which only the title is preserved deals with the question *Whether rhetoric is a virtue*.[147] As Jeuckens has argued,[148] Plutarch, as opposed to Plato, did leave some room for a conception of rhetoric as a *technê*, but it is improbable that he would take up such a manifestly un-Platonic position as to argue that rhetoric is a virtue. Moreover, Plutarch's condemnation of rhetoric as an end in itself runs through the Chaeronean's work, which makes it quite unlikely that he would suddenly place rhetoric amongst the virtues.

In any case, Plutarch's aversion to rhetoric was apparently not rooted so deeply that he refrained from narrating the *Lives* of a Demosthenes and a Cicero (albeit, in the former's case, somewhat more positively than in the latter's) or from composing some epideictic speeches of his own, a couple of which have come down to us in the *Corpus Plutarcheum*.[149] On a more personal level, Plutarch entertained a friendly relationship with Favorinus of Arles, an Academic philosopher but also one of the virtuoso show performers of his day. All in all, given the thorough literary education of the Chaeronean, becoming apparent from his fluent pen and the many learned arguments and allusions throughout his work, Plutarch must in fact have believed in some good discursive practice that had a clear rhetorical flavour and was nonetheless compatible with his devotion to philosophy.

Lieve Van Hoof has demonstrated how Plutarch's works on practical ethics also gain meaning when contextualized within his own social world.[150] Aware of Plutarch's intricate connection with important social players of his day, Van

146 Lamprias catalogue nr. 219.

147 Lamprias catalogue nr. 86.

148 See Jeuckens (1907), 24–30.

149 See Plut. *Glor.Ath.* and *Al.Magn.fort.* These works could be (and have been) attributed to Plutarch's youth, after which he became a more philosophical person, but a comparison with Marcus Aurelius (see below) shows that it is entirely possible that someone, even an older person, who felt himself inclined to reject ostentatious rhetoric, wanted to or was forced to practise some rhetoric himself.

150 See Van Hoof (2010). See also the various aspects of Plutarch's social position in Mossman (ed.) (1997).

Hoof hypothesizes that Plutarch's philosophical pose in his practical ethics is deliberately constructed in order to corroborate Plutarch's intellectual and, indirectly, also his political position among the elite citizens of the Roman Empire. Through close analyses of textual strategies in Plutarch's writings on practical ethics, she aims to show how powerful citizens of the Roman Empire are subtly drawn to a practical form of philosophy in order to distinguish themselves from others by their more refined sense of aristocratic etiquette.

While a reading of this corpus of texts as a merely strategic enterprise by the Chaeronean yields some fruitful results, the question remains as to whether we can reduce Plutarch's writings on practical ethics to the author's strategic philosophical self-positioning in his social world. It is valuable to complement the one-sided view of Plutarch as a thoroughly benign and philanthropic individual, but Van Hoof's Plutarch, stripped almost entirely from philosophical idealism and fully immersed in political pragmatism, may be equally unbalanced in the other direction. Nevertheless, her study has raised an awareness of the processes of (self)authorization implicit in many of Plutarch's works, and revealed an undeniable interaction between Plutarch and his social world, a connection that may previously not have been sufficiently taken into account.

What adds some plausibility to Van Hoof's 'political' reading of Plutarch is the fact that the Chaeronean did certainly not oppose himself to the thesis that a philosopher should have some impact on his society. His own close relationships with politically active Romans, such as Lucius Mestrius Florus and Quintus Sosius Senecio (both of consular status), as well as his own active career, illustrate this on a more biographical level, but these ideas also receive some theoretical foundation in a number of treatises from his *Moralia*.

In the treatise *That a philosopher should converse especially with men in power*, Plutarch argues that the maximization of an impact on others will contribute to a philosopher's well-being, which is why he advises a philosopher to converse particularly with the powerful, since they have, in their turn, the most impact on society.[151] The works *To an uneducated ruler* and *Political precepts* bring this active role for the philosopher into practice, as Plutarch displays himself as an advisor of an unnamed ruler and a further unknown Menemachus, an ambitious young man asking for political advice. *Whether an old man should engage in public affairs* is an exhortation to old men to take up public responsibilities, if only because old people tend to be less self-interested than youngsters. In these works, as well as in Plutarch's discussion of some important

151 For the rhetorical character of this work, see Roskam (2009a), 132–133.

politicians' *Lives*, it becomes apparent that he believed in the superior moral qualities of outstanding individuals,[152] and regarded their rhetorical talent as a suitable attribute for someone aspiring to public career, as long as it does not become an end in itself.

Much has been written about Plutarch's attitude toward the Roman Empire. Christopher Jones believes that Plutarch was, like many other Greek aristocrats, a supporter of Roman Imperial power, as it enabled him to develop his successful career and interpersonal relationships with powerful citizens.[153] It is certainly true that Plutarch did not act subversively to the face of the Romans, but—as Simon Swain has above all convincingly argued—this pragmatic pose may well conceal a higher interest in the preservation of power among the Greeks, even if it be on a cultural rather than on a strictly political level.[154] Swain's judgement testifies to a growing interest in the subtle negotiations of power and identity that have become the main frame of reference in scholarly discussions from the '90s onwards. As much as Plutarch took part in Roman Imperial life, then, he deliberately cultivated his status as a *Greek* philosopher in search for socio-cultural authority.

One final cornerstone of Plutarch's philosophical interest is his *polymatheia*. His inquisitive mind resulted in a series of works that display a broad spectrum of knowledge, ranging from historical saying of kings and Spartans over natural causes and phenomena to Greek, Roman, and barbaric customs. While Plutarch's interest in such *faits divers* could at first view seem a characteristic of Second Sophistic *paideia*, the practice of gathering information and speculating about *problêmata* was well established within the field of philosophy through the legacy of Plato's brilliant pupil Aristotle.[155] Aristotle and his followers thus legitimize the search for knowledge as a stepping-stone to wisdom. It should not surprise, therefore, that Plutarch had an extensive library, and that he made some notes of instructive passages and examples for certain of his assertions, which do indeed come back in his work in the form of thematic clusters.[156] That this knowledge could also have a wider social meaning

152 Plutarch was not a big fan of democracy, which forms another Platonic characteristic of his. See Teixeira (1995), and Roskam (2005), 406–408. On Plutarch's political thought in general, see Aalders (1982). Various aspects of politics are also discussed in Gallo—Scardigli (eds.) (1995). See also the overview in Pelling (2013).

153 Jones (1971), 120 sqq.

154 See Swain (1996), esp. 183–186.

155 For the place of Aristotle within the Platonist tradition in Plutarch's view, see Roskam (2008–2009).

156 For the cluster hypothesis and proof for it in Plutarch's work, see Van der Stockt (1999).

is illustrated in his *Table talk*, where specialists in different areas of knowledge come together to speculate about physical, cultural, and other questions over wine.[157]

Scholarly reception of Plutarch used to portray him as a great intellectual, philosopher, and man of letters, standing largely on his own in a world of cultural decay. The last few decades have witnessed numerous studies that have proven that Plutarch was indeed very much a representative of his cultural world.[158] As appears from the overview here, as well as from the aforementioned studies, this holds also true for his self-presentation as a philosopher and an anti-sophist. Far from operating in an intellectual vacuum, he is rather to be seen as an impressively versatile thinker who self-consciously sought for positive appreciation for his philosophical knowledge and character.

4.4 *Epictetus (ca. 55–135 CE)*

The Stoic philosopher Epictetus was born in Hieropolis and worked during the first part of his life as a slave for Epaphroditus, a famous freedman who served as the secretary of Nero. During these years, he proved himself a talented young man and was sent to study with Musonius Rufus, where he acquired a taste for Stoic philosophy. Later, after he was set free by his master, Epictetus was among the philosophers who were banned by Domitian from Rome. In response to this banishment, he went off to the city of Nicopolis, where he taught philosophical courses to young Roman elites who appeared to have come from quite afar to study with him. When teaching in Nicopolis, he was even visited by the Emperor Hadrian, which indicates the respect he garnered for his radical philosophical doctrines.

That we have any record of Epictetus' teachings at all is largely due to his pupil Arrian (cf. *infra*), who claims to have written down an accurate recording of Epictetus' words. This corpus of texts consists of a *Manual* containing the master's most important viewpoints and expressions, and a number of books of *Diatribes*, four of which are still extant. The nagging question surrounding this corpus, however, remains as to what extent we can read these texts as a factual testimony of Epictetus' own words, or, put differently, as to how much Arrian has become intertwined with Epictetus' exposition. Scholars tend to disagree

157 See, both for the Aristotelian underpinning and for the social context, Oikonomopoulou (2011).

158 For an overview of several aspects of Plutarch's connection with his socio-cultural world, see Brenk (2007). For Plutarch's thematic connection with Dio Chrysostom, see Pernot (2007).

on this point,[159] but it appears that these texts give us the most direct access we can get to Epictetus, so we are basically condemned to work with them as if they are Epictetus' own words.

Epictetus' commitment to Stoic philosophy is quite strong, in that he does not shy away from attacking the philosophical systems of other schools such as the Epicureans and the Sceptics.[160] He appears to have had considerable respect for the Cynic movement, and primarily for Diogenes.[161] Apart from these schools and figures, Socrates plays a very prominent role in Epictetus' teachings. Epictetus' Socrates is not as much an approximation of wisdom as a firm model sage.[162] Furthermore, Epictetus' discourses are replete with allusions to and citations from philosophical forbears such as Zeno, Chrysippus, and Plato,[163] who authorize Epictetus' message and underline his familiarity with the field of philosophy.

Discursively speaking, Epictetus shows himself an ardent defender of the field of philosophy against the sophistic practices of his day.[164] In line with his Stoic beliefs,[165] he argues that external circumstances can only affect you if you give your assent to it. As a result, everyone holds the key to happiness in his own hands, provided that they do not irrationally attach it to things they cannot control. Of course, among the things we cannot control are physical beauty, a resourceful talent in oratory, a compelling voice, and general approval and acclaim by large audiences. Epictetus' remedy would be to dismiss the pursuit of such futile things, and devote yourself to an alternative cultivation of your free (!) self,[166] your reason, and your will. The ideal result of all this is a life in accordance with nature, an acceptance of divine providence as a guiding source of the universe, and mental peace and quiet.

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159 See, for an emphasis on Arrian's intervention, the standard study by Wirth (1967). More recently, Long (2002), 40–41 has expressed his belief that Arrian's notes reflect Epictetus' actual teaching quite well.

160 See, e.g., Epict. 1.5; 1.23; 2.20; 3.7.

161 See especially Epict. 3.22.

162 See Long (2002), 33 and 67–96.

163 See Jagu (1946).

164 For a chapter on Epictetus and his anti-sophistic polemic, see Winter (1997), 113–122. See also Millar (1965).

165 For an overview of Epictetus' Stoic system, Bonhöffer (1890) and (1894) are still the canonical works.

166 Given Epictetus' previous status as a slave, the philosophical idea that freedom is a matter of mental disposition rather than external circumstances must have had a particular resonance. It is no coincidence that Epictetus' longest discourse (4.1) deals with the theme of freedom.

Another facet of Epictetus' aversion of the sophistic world is the sophistic devotion to knowledge as an end in itself. The fact that Epictetus was offering teachings to upper-class citizens made him, willing or not, a competitor on the general market of education, and forced him to set his teachings apart from the mere sophists of his day. At least some sophists seemed to have treated *paideia* as an end in itself, and not as a stepping-stone to a higher good. Epictetus responds to this tendency with a protreptic style that often consists of a merciless assault on his young pupils' conscience.[167] With poignant verbal strategies, he exposes their moral weaknesses and exhorts them to do better in the remainder of their lives.[168] This radical style of speaking stands in clear contrast to the pleasing voices of the sophistic show-speakers of his era.

If we bear in mind that Epictetus' pupils indeed consisted of the *jeunesse dorée* of their generation and previously enjoyed a good general education, the philosopher's biting provocations become all the more apparent. Since it is quite likely that some of the pupils considered themselves quite accomplished *pepaideumenoi*, Epictetus' radical redefinition of what it is to be educated must have left them with a sour aftertaste. Those who solely indulge in rhetorical display and become pompous in this respect are provocatively named *apaideutoi*, people without education.[169] Epictetus' *paideia*, for its part, aims to "learn how, in conformity with nature, to adapt to specific instances our preconceived idea of what is rational and what is irrational."[170] This is an on-going learning process that asks for an abundance of time and effort, and sets itself apart from the superficial and ready-made signs of honour that can be won in the public sphere.[171]

At times, Epictetus even more vehemently reacts to some tendencies that he observes in his social world, which seems to have been replete with ambitious

167 See, e.g., Epict. 1.4.6 sqq., where it is argued that pure knowledge (*noein*) of Chrysippus' books does not suffice for a philosopher. This emphasis on the higher practical purpose of philosophical knowledge runs throughout other Imperial Stoic authors as well. See Reydams-Schils (2010).

168 Cf. the introduction to Arrian's record of Epictetus' discourses, in which Arrian remarks that "even when he uttered [his words] he was clearly aiming at nothing else but to incite the minds of his hearers to the best things" (transl.: W.A. Oldfather).

169 See Epict. 1.8.7–8; 1.19.1; 2.1.22; 2.17.26–27.

170 Epict. 1.2.6 (transl.: W.A. Oldfather). See also Epict. 1.22.9–10.

171 See, e.g., Epict. 4.8.34; 3.9 (in dialogue with an orator rushing to the court). For the notion of philosophy as a continuous exercise, both in Epictetus and before him, see Hijmans (1959).

politicians, rhetoricians, and sophists. Opponents, whether real or imaginary, are castigated for not having their priorities in order. In the eleventh discourse of the first book, we are told by Arrian that Epictetus takes on a Roman official (*τινος … τῶν ἐν τέλει*), who probably thinks of himself as quite an accomplished person, but who is bluntly told by Epictetus that he is in fact welcome in his school, but will have to go through a long regimen before achieving anything relevant (§ 40).[172] In the first discourse of the third book, a student of rhetoric with a fancy haircut is shown that his hair (and, in fact, his whole body) does not belong to him, and should receive no more attention than nature allows. Elsewhere,[173] Epictetus disapprovingly describes the case of a man who reads philosophical literature and talks to philosophers just in order to make a display (*ἐπιδείκνυσθαι*) at a banquet, trying to win the admiration of a senator who is sitting nearby. Examples and situations like these situate Epictetus' 'theoretical' viewpoints firmly in his concrete social context, and show immediately how the pupils ought to implement his teachings in their everyday life experiences.

On the level of moral and practical conduct, Epictetus is an ardent advocate of consistency and full devotion to one's natural predispositions. In Epictetus' worldview, it is thus impossible to practise different professions, and to combine rhetorical and philosophical ambitions. Those who opt for philosophy must always obey its requirements, even if they conflict with other pursuits. The ideal that arises from such philosophical devotion is a life free of restlessness. If people fail to devote themselves clearly to one particular pursuit, they will suffer from the Stoic master's contempt and castigations:

> So you too are now an athlete, now a gladiator, then a philosopher, after that a rhetorician, yet with your whole soul nothing, but like an ape you imitate whatever you see, but what you are accustomed to bores you. For you have never gone out after anything with circumspection, nor after you have examined the whole matter all over and tested it, but you act at haphazard and half-heartedly.
>
> EPICT. 3.15.6–7; transl. W.A. OLDFATHER

Rhetorical and other social abuses by Epictetus' contemporaries are thus eagerly repudiated, but this does not mean that the appreciation for rhetoric is

172 It should be noted, however, that Epictetus is not entirely opposed to serving in the Senate, as long as it does not jeopardize one's philosophical qualities. See Epict. *Ench.* 24.4–5.

173 See Epict. 1.26.9.

entirely absent in Epictetus, as long as it does not take away the focus from the true goals in life. It seems quite acceptable to prefer a discourse that is presented well over a bad one, but stylistic fluency is no crucial criterion.[174] On the productive side, Epictetus warns his pupils in the twenty-first oration of the third book not to enter the profession of lecturing (*sophisteuein*) lightheartedly.[175] One needs a considerable age, a good way of life, and some contact with god as a guide (§11). Moreover, philosophy is not something to merely practise for enjoyment, and therefore, when a lecturer actually finds the principles of philosophy entertaining, he ought to keep quiet and not call himself a philosopher (§23). Implicit in all this is Epictetus' firm belief in his own sincerity and seriousness, which allows him to address his pupils with the confident tone of a merciless moralist.

If Epictetus' own preaching testifies to some rhetorical skill—albeit not as much to the traditional rhetorical techniques—he is quick to deny his own adherence to the field of sophistry. In the twenty-third discourse of the third book, Epictetus gives his philosophical preaching method some, albeit not very technical, theoretical underpinning. After having exposed the weaknesses of an (imaginary?) opponent from the sophistic camp, he sets out that philosophy is not a matter of pleasure, but of pain, and that it is only through pain that moral improvement can happen (§30). The philosopher is thus a healer of the soul, who makes use of some rhetorical styles for the sake of the mental health of his listeners. Since a philosopher also needs to communicate with his audience, there is, of course, always a discursive dimension present, and, in this case, it forces Epictetus to define his boundaries between good and bad rhetoric. The *logoi* of which Epictetus approves for philosophical ends are the didactic, the *epiplêktic* (the 'rebuking' style), and the protreptic (§33–38),[176]

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174 See Epict. 2.23.1. See also further in this discourse (2.23.27–29 and 46–47), where eloquence is declared to be wholly subjected to one's *prohairesis*.

175 It must be admitted, however, that the authenticity of the titles of the individual discourses is not certain, and that therefore the verb *sophisteuein* may have been a later interpretation of the topic of this speech. For roughly the same argument as regards philosophical outlook, see Epict. 4.8.

176 In contrast to what I argued in Lauwers (2013), 349, when I was not aware of Boter's article, I am convinced by the suggestion in Boter (2009) that the reading of the second style should be '*epiplêktikos*' instead of the traditional reading '*elegktikos*', since it resolves an internal problem in Epictetus' work itself and brings the text in close correspondence to a passage in Ps.-Demetrius' *On Style*. While it does not matter that much for my discussion here, this interpretation leads towards a different classification and estimation of the speaking styles in Epictetus' discourses. For an interpretation on the basis of the reading

while the epideictic style is explicitly dismissed from Epictetus' philosophical repertoire.[177]

A final aspect where Epictetus turns himself against the sophistic field is in the twenty-seventh discourse of the first book, where he accuses the arguments of the Sceptics of being *σοφίσματα* (§ 2). Epictetus here reacts as a logician against what he believes to be sophistic discourses (*σοφιστικοὺς λόγους*—§ 6). We can see here how the term 'sophist' can also be applied to rivalling philosophical schools whose viewpoints are not compatible with the proper beliefs.

What was the effect of all this, then, on Epictetus' pupils? Did they really turn their lives around to devote themselves radically to philosophy? There was perhaps a group of them who did, but it appears that quite a lot of them, among whom Arrian, went on with their public life without giving up their philosophical ambitions.[178] It is quite paradoxical that such a radically devoted philosopher as Epictetus probably owes a lot of his fame to his powerful students, who may have been less powerful if they were fully persuaded to imitate their Stoic master, to devote themselves to philosophical self-care, and to leave their worldly ambitions behind.

After Epictetus' death, his star continued to shine. Marcus Aurelius was so captured by his words that they seem to have inspired the Emperor's philosophical thinking (cf. *infra*). Further, he has influenced an innumerable number of thinkers and authors, ranging from the sixth-century philosopher Simplicius to the popular 1998 novel *A man in full* by Tom Wolfe, in which the writings of Epictetus play a prominent role. No one questions Epictetus' status as a full-blown philosopher, which immediately makes him one of the major sources for the reconstruction of Imperial Stoicism. Even though, philosophically speaking, he was not as innovative as the Hellenistic founders of the Stoic school, his uncompromising style gave him a peculiar place among the famous hard-line philosophers of the Roman era.

'elenctic', see Long (2002), 52–64. For the protreptic speech, moreover, see Schofield (2007), 74–81.

177 For a detailed discursive analysis of the entire discourse, see Lauwers (2013), 345–349, with relevant bibliography.

178 Brunt (1977), finding no influence of Epictetus in the rest of Arrian's oeuvre, comes to the conclusion that Arrian's devotion to Epictetus' philosophy was a kind of philosophical posing rather than a sign of profound commitment. Cf. *infra* for a discussion of Arrian's philosophical pose.

4.5 *Favorinus of Arles (ca. 80–ca. 160 CE)*

Favorinus was no doubt one of the most famous and controversial intellectuals of the second century.[179] Although not much of his literary work has survived, his personality, ideas, and impact can well be measured on the basis of external evidence.[180] Plutarch must have considered him as an intellectual peer, with whom he shared philosophical thoughts and also genuine feelings of friendship.[181] Epictetus and Favorinus quarrelled over epistemological issues.[182] Polemo shows his aversion of him—which extends to his physical appearance—in his physiognomical treatise.[183] Gellius honours his knowledge and personality in many anecdotes. Lucian mentions him in his *Eunuchus* (§ 7 and 10), his *Demonax* (§ 12–13), and his *Hercules* (§ 4). Galen attacked his position concerning the proper method of teaching.[184] Philostratus, finally, includes him in the list of philosophers who were so well versed that they were named sophists.[185]

The extant speeches of his are, as already said, not numerous, but their written record does testify to a cunning and self-conscious talent.[186] The *Corinthian oration*, transmitted as the thirty-seventh oration in the corpus of his master Dio Chrysostom, is an address to the people of Corinth after they had removed

179 The most comprehensive overviews of Favorinus' life and work are Barigazzi (1993), building on his pioneering work in Barigazzi (1966), the chapter about Favorinus in Holford-Strevens (2003), 98–130, and the introduction of Amato (2005).

180 An exhaustive list of *testimonia* about Favorinus are to be found in Amato (2005), 319–384. Fragments from his works are gathered in Amato (2010).

181 See Bowie (1997). Plutarch's work *Prim.Frig.* is dedicated to Favorinus. According to Gal. *Opt.Doct.* 1, Favorinus wrote an epistemological treatise entitled *Plutarch, or On the Academic disposition*. According to the Lamprias catalogue, Plutarch also composed a work *On friendship* that was dedicated to Favorinus.

182 See Opsomer (1997). If Opsomer's assumptions are correct, the dispute between Epictetus and Favorinus could have arisen through provocations from Epictetus to Plutarch's Academic circle. In any case, Favorinus composed a dialogue between Onesidemus, a slave of Plutarch, and Epictetus, probably in order to mock Epictetus' background as a slave and show that his Stoic arguments are so light that they can even be refuted by the Chaeronean's household.

183 See also Phil. *VS*. 490–491.

184 In *Opt.Doct.*, Galen appears to have taken Favorinus as the key opponent in his general attack on Academic epistemology and teaching.

185 Phil. *VS*. 489–492.

186 For studies of Favorinus' speeches in Dio's corpus, see Amato (1995). For an interpretation and a contextualisation of the *Corynthian oration*, see the analyses in Gleason (1995), 3–20 and König (2001).

his statue from their public library. The first two of the three orations *On fate*, transmitted as the sixty-third and sixty-forth oration of the corpus of Dio Chrysostom, may actually be works by Favorinus as well. Finally, thanks to a papyrus discovery, we also have an oration *On exile*, a general comment on his status as an exile, even though some modern scholars strongly wonder whether Favorinus was actually sent into exile at all, and rather assume that this simulation was part of his own philosophical self-fashioning on the basis of his free speech and his subsequent thoughtful life outside the common run.[187]

According to the *Suda*,[188] Favorinus rivalled Plutarch in literary output, which already indicates how much must have been lost of this versatile intellectual. The *Suda* mentions works about indubitably philosophical topics such as the philosophy of Homer, the love of Socrates, Plato, and the right conduct in life for philosophers. Fragments that are transmitted in other works suggest that this sample of topics is just the tip of the iceberg. Philostratus mentions Favorinus' *On Pyrrhonian tropes* as his most impressive work.[189] Moreover, in the third-century philosophical biographer Diogenes Laërtius, we receive references to Favorinus' *Miscellaneous history*, apparently a resourceful work that also treated philosophical topics. Finally, he also composed a work in five books entitled *Apomnêmoneumata*, probably a reference to Xenophon's work about Socrates, but if Ewen Bowie is right, the topic of these reminiscences was not just a miscellany of other philosophers, but also some of Favorinus' personal memoirs.[190]

Favorinus was a man of paradoxes: he was a Celt from birth who became a Greek through learning, he was a eunuch who committed adultery, and he criticized the Emperor and survived it.[191] Indeed, despite his unlikely origin and his

187 A translation of this oration is offered in Whitmarsh (2001), 302–324. For fairly recent discussions of the topical philosophical character of the exilic theme and the possibly self-constructed exile, see, above all, Swain (1989), and Nesselrath (2007). One of the main problems in determining whether the text actually reflects Favorinus' own situation is that the papyrus breaks off at the beginning and the end, usually the most personal parts of a speech.

188 *Suda*, s.v. Favorinus.

189 Phil. *VS*. 491. See also Gell. 11.5.5.

190 See Bowie (1997), 5–6.

191 Phil. *VS*. 490. See Holford-Strevens (1997). The last paradox may have been the result of Favorinus' own rebellious self-representation in his social world, rather than an actual quarrel with the powerful Hadrian. See however, for some external evidence (apart from his exilic discourse and Philostratus), Cass.Dio 69.3.4–4.1, who relates the difficult relationship between the two to Hadrian's envious temper at those who were more talented than himself.

unlikely sexual status,[192] he managed to realize his ambitions as a gifted verbal performer, who eventually mastered Greek and Latin so well that he was often consulted concerning technical and highly specialized language issues. Moreover, his performances must have been so dazzling that even those who could not understand what he said were blown away by the sonorous modulations of his voice, the rhythm of his speech, and his physical *présence*.[193] In many ways diverging from the typical norm of the male sophist,[194] he eventually succeeded in building a reputation as a learned individual, a talented and powerful performer, and a respected philosopher. However, it is quite probable that his flamboyant appearance, his dramatic performances, and his self-confident discourses on many diverse matters in life must have been a constant threat to his philosophical aura, as these aspects were quite in line with contemporary practices of the sophists.[195]

As a public figure, he first seemed to have enjoyed a conspicuous status in the Roman Empire, having been promoted by the Emperor Hadrian to the rank of an *eques*. Around 125 CE, however, he seems to have fallen from grace, and must have been exiled—if we are to believe his own narration (cf. *infra*). Later in his life, under Antoninus Pius, he appears to have been restored to his previous status, and became once again, if he was indeed ever out of sight, an important player in the intellectual circles of Rome.

The contention over Favorinus' philosophical status becomes apparent through a couple of anecdotes from his life. An anecdote in Philostratus,[196] illustrating the difficult relationship between Favorinus and Hadrian, is quite revealing as regards the potential questionability of Favorinus' status as a philosopher, at least in the eyes of an unwilling judge. When, around 125 CE, he was appointed high priest in his home region, he sought immunity from the office, based on the argument that he was a philosopher. When he noticed, however, that Hadrian was not going to grant immunity because he did not regard Favorinus as a philosopher, Favorinus quickly narrated a dream in which his teacher Dio actually encouraged him to take the office after all (thus preventing a public humiliation through Hadrian's rejection of his being a philosopher). If we are to believe Philostratus, this event initiated a loss of prestige,

192 Rather than being a real eunuch, he is believed to have suffered from cryptorchidism.

193 Phil. *VS*. 491.

194 Gleason (1995) uses the antagonisms between the 'typically' male sophist Polemo and the 'atypically' eunuch sophist Favorinus throughout her excellent study of gender in the Second Sophistic.

195 Cf. Swain (1989), 153.

196 See Phil. *VS*. 490.

culminating in the destruction of his public statue in Athens by the Athenians, because Favorinus was then seen as the most combative enemy of the Emperor, even though the Emperor himself is reported to have considered the quarrel only a minor issue.

In Lucian's *Demonax* (§ 12), the Cynic philosopher Demonax disapproved of Favorinus' speeches, because they were vulgar, effeminate, and not suitable for philosophy. Even though Favorinus' teacher Dio delivered speeches in the guise of a Cynic persona, it is well in line with Cynic belief in simplicity and straightforwardness that Demonax here castigates the verbal mannerisms of Favorinus, who must have taken Dio's humble and ironic aura of the philosopher to an entirely different level, where public enchantment and copious verbosity were explicitly and shamelessly pursued.[197]

The preceding two anecdotes may indicate that Favorinus' status as a philosopher was never beyond doubt. However, when we look at other voices from this era, a considerable number of people seem to have regarded him as a genuine philosopher. On which basis, then, did Favorinus claim philosophical credibility?

Favorinus' philosophical self-fashioning is anchored in his adherence to Academic Scepticism. It is a misunderstanding to assume that the Middle Platonism of the Imperial era was solely and thoroughly dogmatic, and that Scepticism was restricted to the Pyrrhonians, who claimed to be following in the footsteps of the fourth/third-century philosopher Pyrrho.[198] It is important to notice that within the confines of the Platonic Academy, there was a notable place for Sceptical tendencies that could be traced back to Socrates' aporetic and zetetic attitude in his dialectical method.[199] The Academic Sceptics did not accept, as did the dogmatic philosophical schools lead by the Stoics, that sensory or mental perceptions sufficed to bring about true opinions. The Sceptics did thus not reject the mere existence of the truth, but emphasized the fact that we as human beings could have no access to it, thus forcing us to maintain a constant state of suspension of judgement. The goal of philosophy, in their opinion, is not the achievement of philosophical wisdom, as it is for the dogmatists, but the constant aporetic search for the truth.

197 About the fact that Favorinus in no way resembled his teacher Dio, see Phil. *VS*. 492.

198 This misunderstanding has caused traditional scholarship of Favorinus to ignore the obvious indications that he was a devoted member of the Academy and to place him in the Pyrrhonist camp. For some justified criticisms, see Glucker (1978), 282–283. On Favorinus' Academic position, see also Ioppolo (1993).

199 See the illuminative study by Opsomer (1998).

As we have already seen, the influential figures of the Hellenistic Academy, and most prominently Carneades, combined Scepticism with a great rhetorical talent, which he used to debate matters *in utramque partem*, in order to show that a probable argument could be confronted with an equally probable opposite argument, thus advocating a state of constant suspension of judgement. This does obviously not mean, however, that the Academians did not partake in ordinary life. Quite to the contrary, according to Carneades, an Academic Sceptic should follow whatever seems convincing to him in order to conduct his life as any normal human being would.

In the light of this traditional philosophical paradigm, Favorinus could remain true to some serious philosophical commitments, without having to abandon his rhetorical practices or his interests in diverse human affairs. The tradition of Academic Scepticism thus justifies Favorinus' behaviour as a spectacular rhetorician, displayer of *paideia*, and advisor concerning diverse human affairs on a higher level, as long as he could make his audience believe that behind this sophistic *façade* a deeply aporetic and zetetic philosopher could be found. Together with some figures in Lucian, Favorinus may form the most illuminating example of this era of how an Academic philosopher could display a wealth of seemingly sophistic activities and yet retain his philosophical credibility.

While the Academic Sceptical tradition thus serves as an overall framework that legitimizes Favorinus' social behaviour, his philosophical inclinations also appear from his keen interest in natural phenomena and cultural customs. Favorinus' *polymatheia* is thus not (only) to be regarded as an eruption of sophistic *paideia*, but is legitimized within the philosophical field by the Aristotelian school. As we have seen in our discussion of Plutarch, the registration of and speculation about the physical and social world are truly philosophical occupations. In fact, if we look at the places where Favorinus figures in Plutarch's works, it is hard to avoid the impression that this occurs primarily due to their shared interest in such knowledge. Favorinus thus shows up as a dinner guest in Plutarch's *Table talk*[200] and is also staged in the *Roman questions* with a hypothesis for why Romans make their children swear to Hercules in the open air.[201] Furthermore, Plutarch's work dedicated to Favorinus that is still extant, *On the primordial cold*, is Plutarch's most sceptical work *and* deals with a physical cause.

200 Plut. *Q.C.* 8.10. Favorinus is told by Plutarch to be most convinced by the Aristotelian school (734f), but in this particular case, he builds on the authority of Democritus.

201 Plut. *Q.Rom.* 28.

Both the Academic and the Peripatetic sides of Favorinus are also revealed in Aulus Gellius' *Attic nights*, where the Celt plays a major role in numerous anecdotes.[202] A couple of examples will suffice in this context. In 20.1, Gellius recounts the discussion between Sextus Caecilius, a legal expert, and Favorinus concerning the Law of the Twelve Tables. In § 9–10, Favorinus points out that he cannot make any firm statements, as this is not compatible with his philosophical *hairesis*. In § 21, Sextus asks Favorinus to abandon his habitual way of Academic argumentation, and look for a definitive answer. Both interlocutors are thus aware of Favorinus' philosophical restraints, which render a search for a definitive answer quite problematic; however, this attitude did not have a paralyzing effect on the discussion, as Favorinus eventually respects Sextus' learned answer, even if his philosophical conviction compels him to remain sceptical.

Favorinus' Sceptical beliefs also appear to have made him a trustworthy judge in philosophical discussions. In 18.1, Gellius pictures a discussion between a Stoic and a Peripatetic philosopher concerning the question as to whether virtue alone is enough to be happy, with Favorinus as the judge in the debate. It soon becomes apparent that Favorinus' Sceptical attitude is well suited to perform a critical examination of the philosophers' respective standpoints, not unlike Lucian's alter ego Lycinus in the *Hermotimus* (see below).

Favorinus' Sceptical beliefs also underlie his attack of astronomic predictors of the future (14.1). For an epistemological Sceptic like Favorinus, deriving anything certain from the stars is merely absurd and based on foolish folklore. The speech, one of the most extensive pieces of the *Attic nights*, is translated by Gellius from the Greek into Latin.

These anecdotes are complemented by a more flamboyant and/or rhetorical picture of Favorinus in his legal advise to Gellius (14.2), in a grammatical discussion with Domitius (18.7), in his exhortation to a woman to breastfeed her baby herself (12.1), in his refutations of his pupils' attempts at interpreting a text from Sallust (3.1), or in his learned speech on the various sorts of winds and their names at a symposium (2.22). Throughout Gellius' narration, Favorinus may not display the seriousness of another of Gellius' teachers, Calvenus Taurus, but the image that emerges is that of a good conversationalist, standing firmly in public life, capable of embellishing his interventions with wit and learned references (as befits a polymath of his calibre), and sensitive to etiquette and

202 For the role of Favorinus in Gellius' narration, see Beall (2001), and, again, Holford-Strevens (2003), 98–130. Other contributions on the social context of the *Attic nights* can be found in Holford-Strevens—Vardi (eds.) (2004).

good manners.[203] Even though such an attitude has been associated with the world of the Second Sophistic,[204] Gellius quite consistently labels Favorinus as a philosopher, and, judging upon the frequency with which the Celt figures in these anecdotes as a benevolent and charismatic intellectual, Gellius may well have estimated him the most agreeable philosopher of the lot.[205]

Most of our sources mentioned above depict Favorinus as an active member in his intellectual society, partaking in intellectual discussions, giving advice, and seemingly enjoying himself while doing so. As regards Favorinus' *self*-presentation as a philosopher in his 'philosophical' works, it is unfortunately quite impossible to determine how he discursively portrayed himself and his (real or imagined) adversaries as sophists or philosophers. Even though it is probable that he dissimulated his own status as a sophist and portrayed sophistry as a negative paradigm, we cannot know for sure, but since he enjoyed a close alliance with the people around Plutarch, it is quite likely that he adopted similar discursive strategies as the Chaeronean in his philosophical invectives.

Moreover, there are some indications that Favorinus did have an apologetic reflex about his philosophical commitment in his treatment of authoritative figures from the past. In Diogenes Laërtius' discussion of Socrates, the biographer mentions the fact that Favorinus, in his *Miscalleneous history*, called Socrates the first person, together with Aeschines, to have practised rhetoric.[206] Given Favorinus' obvious Academic commitment, it is not implausible to assume that this 'fact' is mentioned to corroborate his own self-authorization as a rhetorical philosopher. As Jan Opsomer aptly argued, the fact that Galen wrote a treatise *Against Favorinus against Socrates* appears to imply that Favorinus associated his philosophy with Socrates' example, so calling him the first practitioner of rhetoric may have helped establish his own authority as a philosophical rhetorician. Elsewhere in Diogenes Laërtius, we find another reference to Favorinus' *Miscalleneous history*, reporting an anecdote about Demetrius of Phalerum, a rhetorician and a Peripatetic philosopher from the fourth and third

203 An example of the last quality is the fact that he realizes, at 2.22.25–26, that his speech about winds risks being too long for a symposium, where there is no place for an *epideixis* of this kind.

204 See the negative estimation of Favorinus' teaching method in Roskam (2009b), 379–380, mostly based on the (modern?) assumption that philosophical education should revolve around independent thinking rather than knowledge transmission.

205 Cf. Beall (2001), 104.

206 D.L. 2.20.

century BCE.[207] Again, is it coincidental that Favorinus picks a figure whose philosophical character was honoured despite his commitment to rhetoric? While these observations alone do not suffice to pull any firm conclusions about Favorinus' discursive self-presentation, they closely correspond with the portrayal of him in external sources and the general tendencies of his era.

Favorinus' impact on his cultural environment can hardly be exaggerated. He was the teacher of Fronto, who was himself Marcus Aurelius' teacher of rhetoric. Other pupils of his include Herodes Atticus, one the most notable intellectuals of the second century, and obviously also Aulus Gellius, whose *Attic nights* testifies to a varied interest in ancient phenomena, anecdotes, and language issues. As an ambiguous figure in his socio-cultural milieu, he illustrates the extent to which rhetorical talent could be combined with a convincing philosophical self-presentation. He may not be revered and loved by each and everyone, but the open friendship with Plutarch and the seriousness of the reply that Galen gives to his philosophical standpoints suggest Favorinus' undeniable position as a prime representative of the Academic school of philosophy. Academic Scepticism itself, with its recognition of the need for a philosopher to partake in everyday life and to discuss the two sides of a dilemma, made it possible that he could cultivate his overall *paideia* and yet place himself above the mere sophists of his day, whom he must nonetheless have resembled quite closely.

4.6 *Arrian of Nicomedia (ca. 86–ca. 160 CE)*

Not many public figures in the Roman Empire were as versatile as Arrian, and this is evident both in his life and in his literary output.[208] Born in a Nicomedian family of the equestrian or senatorial class, he became the protégé of the influential Roman senator Gaius Avidius Nigrinus (the son of Plutarch's important friend Nigrinus the Elder), who launched Arrian's very successful political career, and probably also incited him to study Greek culture and philosophy. As for his education, it is known for a fact that Arrian studied with the Stoic teacher Epictetus, who left a deep impression on the ambitious youth. Apparently, it was during his study in Nicopolis with Epictetus that he must have met the Emperor Hadrian,[209] which was the beginning of an intimate connection between the Emperor and the talented Nicomedian.

207 D.L. 5.77.

208 Extensive studies of Arrian are Stadter (1980) and Tonnet (1988).

209 Cf. H.A. *VH.* 16.10.

Arrian's political career was very prosperous, especially for a Greek.[210] Eventually, he was to become consul of Rome twice (in 129 and 130), after which he was appointed governor of the province of Cappadocia. In this office, he commanded the Roman army at the frontier of Armenia, where the Empire had to be defended against attacks from the Alani. In 145, Arrian was elected *archon* at Athens, which was considered a very honourable position at the time.

Apart from his political career, he also seems to have cultivated the aura of the literary intellectual, who combined historiographical work with 'leisurely' literature on hunting and philosophy.[211] Still extant from his hand are an *Anabasis of Alexander the Great*,[212] an *Indica*, a work narrating the return of Nearchus from India after Alexander's conquests, the *Discourses of Epictetus*, a *Cynegeticus* on hunting, a *Tactica* in which he shows his familiarity with the command of an army, a work *Ectaxis* describing his positional set-up of his army against the Alani,[213] and a *Periplus* around the Black Sea, in the form of a letter to the Emperor Hadrian. Among some lost works of his, we can include a *Bithyniaca* about the history of his native region, a *Parthica*, some biographies, and a historiographical work about the events after Alexander's death.

Some remains of his worldly fame are still extant in the form of two (or possibly three) inscriptions dedicated to him. The first inscription has been found in Corinth, where Arrian is honoured by L. Gellius Menander and Gellius Justus as a philosopher and a benefactor.[214] The other inscription stands in Athens and mentions Arrian as a consul and a philosopher.[215] A final, less certain, inscription has been found in Nicomedia, and contains no qualification of Arrian as a philosopher. Moreover, we also have an altar with a dedication for the goddess Artemis that comes from a proconsul of Cappadocia, which was in all likelihood Arrian's doing.[216]

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210 See the detailed discussion in Wheeler (1977) and Syme (1982).

211 The traditional scholarly view seemed to assume that Arrian only started this intellectual career as a writer after his active public life. However, as Bosworth (1972) convincingly argued, Arrian's literary pursuits appear to have been a constant presence throughout his life.

212 See the impressively annotated and illustrated recent edition by Romm (ed.) (2010).

213 See Bosworth (1977).

214 See Kent (1966), nr. 124. Bowersock (1967) did identify the addressee of this dedication as Arrian. See also Robert—Robert (1968), nr. 253.

215 See Peppas-Delmousou (1970), along with Jones (2002a), 111–114.

216 See, for an interpretation of all these epigraphic sources, Oliver (1982).

It may be striking that Arrian could apparently combine the aura of a philosopher with the active life of a successful man of arms and politician. Indeed, only few Roman officials were also seen as philosophers, but Arrian appears to have been one of them. Arrian's status as a philosopher is also acknowledged in a biography by Cassius Dio entitled *Life of Arrian the philosopher*, which is unfortunately now lost.[217]

How did Arrian achieve this fame for being a philosopher? On the basis of his literary works, we can state that his philosophical credibility rested on at least four major cornerstones. Firstly, his literary works as well as his life as a general place him well in line with an authoritative figure from classical Athens, viz. Xenophon. Arrian's self-fashioning as an Imperial Xenophon was in all likelihood inspired by the fact that 'Xenophon' actually appears to have been a part of Arrian's full name, Lucius Flavius Arrianus Xenophon.[218] When we look at his literary production, only few authors from the Imperial period have written about topics as diverse as Arrian; yet, this diversity becomes quite purposeful as soon as we interpret it as an allusion to the diversity of the works by Xenophon the Athenian. Moreover, on several instances, Arrian explicitly allies himself with his intellectual predecessor. Apart from a couple of passages throughout the *Periplus*, the proem of the *Cynegeticus* offers the best example of Arrian's conscious self-fashioning. In this proem, Arrian presents himself as offering a humble addition to Xenophon's *Cynegeticus*. He states that the reason why he needs to add something is not Xenophon's oversight, but Xenophon's ignorance of the Celtic breed of hounds and the Scythian and Libyan breeds of horses, breeds that were apparently used more often in the Roman Empire than in classical Athens. In order to emphasize the close bond with Xenophon, Arrian proudly states that he and the famous Athenian shared ever since their youth the same interests—hunting, generalship, and wisdom (§ 4).[219]

While Xenophon was in classical Antiquity probably seen more as a historiographer and an active servant in the army of Cyrus, his philosophical inclination was beyond doubt, as he was one of the major Socratics. Indeed,

217 *Suda*, s.v. Cassius Dio.

218 Stadter (1967) has aptly observed that Xenophon is not just a nickname for Arrian, but was actually a part of his real name.

219 The last two sentences are roughly a paraphrase based on the English translation in Phillips—Willcock (1999). Yet, for the last word, I kept closer to the text than their translation of *sophia* as philosophy, so as to avoid the accusation of pushing my point here. The idea that the pursuit of philosophy is meant, however, seems quite obvious, given both persons' interest in it, and the fact that philosophy was especially a part of Arrian's education in his youth (with Epictetus).

Xenophon's *Apomnêmoneumata*, despite being recordings of someone else's, viz. Socrates', philosophical words and deeds, established the author's philosophical authority in its own right. Moreover, as a Socratic author, Xenophon joined the company of some other philosophical heavyweights such as Plato and Antisthenes.

In a very similar fashion—and this is also the second cornerstone of his philosophical authority—Arrian's philosophical credibility is largely attached, at least in his literary works, to his recordings of his Stoic master Epictetus' *Discourses*. Arrian's choice to go to Nicopolis for Epictetus might at first sight seem quite odd, since Dio Chrysostom was in Bithynia and seemed to exercise a type of philosophy that could have been well in line with Arrian's active ambitions.[220] By the time Arrian made his choice to go to Epictetus, however, the latter seemed to have developed a grand reputation among the elite citizens of the Roman Empire, while Dio may never have been able to erase all the question marks over his true philosophical devotion. The fact is that Arrian by far outdid Dio in the realization of political ambitions in the upper classes of Roman society.

As mentioned before, Arrian's credibility as a philosopher largely depends on the fact that he recorded the speeches of Epictetus, and it is quite unclear to what extent he served as a mediating force in the transmission of his master's thought. In the introduction to the discourses, he himself asserts that he did not compose the speeches at all, but, as was argued earlier, this refusal of authorial credit for the *inventio* of a text is quite a common strategy in Imperial poetics. The 'topical' humble submission to Epictetus' philosophical authority may thus actually disguise (or, given the period's poetics, highlight) Arrian's rhetorical intervention in the promulgation of his master's teachings.

A third major cornerstone of Arrian's authority seemed to be his intention to be useful for his fellow citizens through his work and life. More than once he emphasizes the useful service he pays to the people with his works.[221] That he was honoured as a benefactor appears from one of the epigraphic source mentioned above. Furthermore, the successes in many facets of his active political career could also have contributed to his overall reputation as a wise man, especially if his political life is presented as being carried out with the

220 Cf. Stadter (1980), 4.

221 See Arr. *Anab.* 7.30.3, where he states that he undertook the work for the benefit of mankind; *Cyn.* 1.5, where he states that, just like Xenophon's additions to other writers, his are to be regarded as helpful to people; and Photius as cited in Stadter (1980), 153, who states that Arrian saw his *Bithyniaca* as a gift to his native city.

thoughtful reflection of a philosopher.[222] As we have already seen, discourses by Dio and Plutarch promoted an active position for the ideal philosopher, so in Arrian's time there was no strict opposition between the devotion to philosophy and intervention in the world of politics—at least not among all of the influential intellectuals of this era.[223]

The exertion of public offices was not even in contradiction with the Stoic philosophy of Epictetus. Indeed, via the theory of the *kathêkonta* (things suited to one's character), Epictetus left the door open for his pupils to pursue the life-path and career that they rationally considered in line with their natural personality.[224] By means of example, it is worthwhile to examine a passage in the *Discourses* where such advice is given to the young listeners:

> You are a calf; when a lion appears, do your own thing; otherwise you will be sorry. You are a bull: go out and fight; for that befits you and you are capable of doing that. You have the ability to lead the army against Troy: be Agamemnon.
>
> EPICT. 3.22.6–7; transl.: A.A. LONG (2002), 240

Like in Favorinus' case, there appears to be a systemic philosophical explanation and justification for behaviour that may at first sight seem quite unphilosophical. Therefore, far from seeing Arrian's engagement in politics and the Roman army as a weak point in his philosophical self-presentation, it could equally well corroborate his reputation as a philosopher among his contemporaries.

A final cornerstone of Arrian's self-presentation as a philosopher is his obvious appearance in his literary works as a polymath, which was, as we have

222 That Arrian did actively think about proper conduct of ruling persons becomes quite apparent in the closing chapter of his *Anabasis*, where he remarks that he has found fault with Alexander on some occasions, and that he did not shy away from making these mistakes plain in his narrative, because of his reverence for the truth (7.30.3). Such an active assessment of historical figures actually comes quite close to Plutarch's purpose in the *Lives*, as discussed above.

223 For a comparison of the political ambition of Marcus Aurelius, Arrian, and Plutarch, see Stadter (2012).

224 See the excellent discussion of Epictetus' reasoning about moral behaviour in Long (2002), 231–258. See also the lucid treatment of the relation between Stoicism and politics in Horst (2013), 50–83, where it argued, on the basis of a discussion of the notions of *oikeiôsis* and *adiaphora*, that Stoicism was not as opposed to political life as is often assumed in modern scholarship.

already seen, a character trait that, through the Aristotelians, also found its way into the philosophical repertoire. Arrian's historiographical works are extremely well documented,[225] not seldom on the basis of autopsy. Literary allusions are never far away, for example in the beautifully subtle reference in the *Periplus* to the death of Hadrian's lover Antinoüs, which is compared to Achilles' friendship with Patroclus (§ 23).[226] Even on the level of language and style, he shows a dazzling versatility. While his historiographical works are usually narrated in textbook Attic prose, his *Indica* are written in Ionic Greek, probably a nod to the founding father of the genre of historiography, Herodotus. Epictetus' *Discourses*, for their part, are written in an expressive *koinê* Greek, probably true to the master's own style. As such they can be seen, from a rhetorical perspective, as an impressive implementation of *êthopoeia*.

This erudition in several domains did not fail to impress his contemporaries. Apart from the epigraphic documentation, Arrian is praised *nominatim* in Lucian's *Alexander* for being one of the foremost Romans, who lived his entire life with learning (παιδείᾳ) (§ 2). His recordings of Epictetus' *Discourses* seem to have circulated quite widely. They were brought up in a conversation at the house of Herodes Atticus,[227] and they were handed over by Junius Rusticus to the Emperor Marcus Aurelius.[228]

Despite Arrian's (probably self-installed) reputation as a philosopher, his philosophical self-fashioning is not based on a dissimulation of his adherence to sophistry. In fact, references to the sophistic practices of his day are very scarce, and figure mostly and even exclusively in the words which he attributes to his philosophical teacher Epictetus. It is, however, not the case that he did not have an opportunity to attack the sophists of his day, since Xenophon's *Cynegeticus*, which was strongly imitated by Arrian, ends with a polemical opposition between the author and the sophists and politicians of his day.[229] This is an opposition that could easily be transferred by Arrian to his own day, but is instead replaced by an assertion of the author's true devotion to the hunting gods. Unlike Dio Chrysostom, Arrian appears to present his status

225 The first and second prefaces to the *Anabasis* (1.Proem.1–3 and 1.12.2–5) indicate that Arrian very self-consciously saw himself as a good historian and someone worthy of his subject.

226 To further illustrate Arrian's learned allusions: Moles (1985) detected no less than five literary influences in Arrian's second proem to the *Anabasis*, viz. Homer, Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, and the prose encomium.

227 Gell. 1.2.

228 M.A. 1.7. On Epictetus' influence on Marcus Aurelius (via Arrian's writings), see below.

229 Cf. Xen. *Cyn.* 13.1–9.

as a philosopher (through innuendo) as an indubitable fact rather than as a *locus* of rhetorical contention. There are three main reasons for this discursive position. Firstly, as a successful citizen of the Roman Empire, he probably placed himself above the mere sophistic quarrels of his day, if only because his socio-political prosperity was already guaranteed by his political life, and did not solely depend on his literary merits. While Dio still had to negotiate his place in his society on the basis of his grand rhetorical talent, Arrian could afford to leave the discursive struggles in the background and install his literary, political, and philosophical fame, it seems, without much contestation. Secondly, in his historiographical works, and especially the *Periplus*, *Tactica*, and *Indica*, we observe a tendency in Arrian to mingle the present with the past, a general characteristic of the literature of this period.[230] This antiquarian reflex, somewhat disguising Arrian's interest in his own time, probably partly explains why we find no direct invectives towards the Imperial sophists in his work. Thirdly and finally, Arrian's successful political career would probably have been quite inconceivable without at least some talent for diplomacy. Why would he risk making powerful enemies by offending the sophists of his day if he could actually manage to avoid such antagonisms in his search for philosophical recognition? While other self-proclaimed philosophers in this overview show less interest in peaceful stability within the cultural field, Arrian may have been more sensitive to the potential political consequences of his condemnation of a popular practice among the Greek elite of the Roman Empire. And perhaps this peaceful and tolerant stance towards the intellectual struggles of his era could then again reinforce his status as a thoughtful member of society, who even deserves to be named a proper philosopher.

4.7 *Aelius Aristides of Smyrna (117–181 CE)*

Aelius Aristides is generally regarded as one of the prime examples of Second Sophistic oratory.[231] He was a revered citizen of Smyrna, served as an ambassador of his home city, gave political advice to cities in Asia Minor, and delivered epideictic speeches of various sorts on numerous occasions. His corpus contains examples of all these facets of his public, political, and intellectual career. Despite his weak physical condition, he managed to gather a considerable amount of fame both during his life and after his death. No wonder, it

230 Cf. Stadter (1980), 49.

231 See the important study by Boulanger (1923). For the reconstruction of Aristides' life on the basis of his literary works, see Lenz (1964) and Behr (1968). See also the collection of contributions on Aristides in Harris—Holmes (eds.) (2008). A full English translation of Aristides is published by Behr (1981–1986).

seems, that Philostratus ranks him among the sophists in his overview of the sophistic lives, not among the philosophers who were also named sophists.[232]

Nevertheless, to regard Aristides as a sophist does not do justice to his own self-conception and self-presentation. In Aristides, we find a generally sustained difference between the art of rhetoric, which generally receives a positive appreciation, and the 'art' of sophistry, which is seen as a deviation from proper rhetorical and philosophical practices.[233] In other words, despite the appreciation of his contemporaries for his sophistic abilities, his self-presentation revolves around the dissimulation of sophistry and the adoption of the art of rhetoric as a full-blown epistemological road to knowledge and wisdom. According to this broad definition of rhetoric—much in the same vein as the fourth-century (BCE) rhetorician/philosopher Isocrates—it should be seen as a serious alternative for philosophy.[234]

The reason why Aristides developed such a 'high' epistemological conception of rhetoric may be partly due to his biography, which sets him apart from the other sophists of this era. As Martin Korenjak convincingly argued,[235] it is plausible that the fame of Imperial sophists was so inextricably intertwined with the *performance* of their speeches that they were less interested in the circulation of their texts after their death. Why, then, did Aristides put so much effort towards the polish of his speeches, and why did he elevate the art of rhetoric above its mere practical use? Korenjak suggests that Aristides' poor physical health, which presented a constant threat to his life and career,[236] caused him to concentrate on his written work and—so we may add—to see himself as a unique spokesperson and advocate of the art of rhetoric, which was his main calling from an early age onward.

Aristides' illness first came over him during his first visit to Rome in 144 CE, a visit that was no doubt supposed to install his fame in the Empire's capital.[237]

232 See Phil. *VS*. 581–585.

233 For a discussion of *loci* with an overall interpretation, see Behr (1994), 1163–1177. Cf. also Mensching (1965), 62 n. 3; Festugière (1969), 148; and Stanton (1973), 355.

234 This epistemological potential of rhetoric has also been recognized in modern revivals of rhetoric as a serious discipline. See, e.g., Scott (1967).

235 See Korenjak (2012).

236 As appears from Aristides' thirty-third oration, some of his opponents used to complain about the fact that he did not declaim enough. Aristides offers his poor health as the prime reason why he cannot excel more often in public performances.

237 The extent to which Aristides was truly happy with the political situation of his day is quite debatable. His twenty-sixth oration *To Rome* seems to suggest that he was at least capable of dealing with the situation in a pragmatic way. See Klein (1981) and Swain (1996), 251–297.

After barely surviving, he was transported to the Asclepieium in Pergamum, where he stayed until 147 CE. It is here that he developed a close bond with the healing god Asclepius, feeling like the chosen one for higher purposes. Thanks to the remarkable recordings of his illnesses and dreams in his *Sacred tales*,[238] we can understand how he imagines himself to be ordered by the god, quite paradoxically, to declaim as a part of his cure. As a testimony of Aristides' physical illnesses and the subsequent treatments of the god, this collection of memories constructs a narrative in which the setbacks from which Aristides suffered in his career are turned into a form of proof of his predestination for a higher rhetorical cause.

While he was in the Asclepieium for the first time, Aristides composed his most 'philosophical' work, a response to Plato in defence of the art of rhetoric (the second oration of his corpus). As I have shown more extensively elsewhere,[239] Aristides here shows his thorough familiarity with Plato's work, and especially the *Gorgias*, and proves himself an ardent and cunning opponent of the easy dismissal of rhetoric as a non-technical pursuit, less serious than philosophy. A careful reading of the work, however, reveals that Aristides does not turn himself against Plato as much as against the philosophers of his day who (ab)use Plato's work to discredit Aristides' pursuits as idle eruptions of sophistry.[240] In other words, it is not Aristides' goal to question the validity of philosophy, but he would rather set rhetoric next to philosophy as an equally worthy profession, or even try to blend both of these fields together into one smooth paradigm. As we have already seen, such a blend of philosophy with performative capacities was a welcome addition to the repertoire of the ideal Imperial *pepaideumenos*. Rhetoric ought to be understood here in its noble and morally just sense; otherwise, it is merely sophistry and does not qualify for Aristides' high standards.

In order to corroborate my analysis of the second oration, some passages will be cited from the third and the fourth oration, which deal with the same philosophical subject. In the fourth oration, entitled *To Capito*, Aristides seems to

238 These *Sacred tales* have received quite some attention in recent years. For a commentary, see Schröder (1986). For extensive interpretative studies, see Pearcy (1988); Petsalis-Diomidis (2010); Israelowich (2012); and Downie (2013).

239 See Lauwers (2013), 350–357.

240 Cf. Pernot (1993), 332; and Milazzo (2002), 53 and *passim*. In this respect, this 'conflict' between philosophy and rhetoric, as labelled by Karadimas (1996), is more of an internal conflict within the field of philosophy itself. Aristides is willing to base his defence on philosophical works, and adopts the discursive and argumentative tone of his contemporaries from the philosophical field.

have answered some objections against the second oration reasonably shortly after its publication.[241] As appears from § 7 of this speech, Aristides does not fully side with the philosophers, but he confidently claims that Plato is also a part of his own repertoire.

> You can recognize that we also have some connection with Plato, if not as much as the philosophers, still enough to know how to delight in the man. For to speak by the grace of the gods, our diction is no impediment to being able to understand any of his material, nor does any proclamation, even if it is the one of the mysteries, drive us away, and those who have know me say that my life is no way dissonant with his views.
>
> ARISTID. 4.7; transl.: C.A. BEHR

Even though he recognizes some difference between himself and the philosophers, he strongly reacts against Capito's assumption that his devotion to rhetorical diction makes him an inferior interpreter of Plato's words. Furthermore, he points out that others, not himself, have seen some similarities between Plato and himself, thus 'proving' that a rhetorician like him can have an equally deep bond of kinship with the philosophical heroes from the past.

The following passage occurs in Aristides' third oration entitled *In defence of the four*, probably written some fifteen to twenty years after the initial oration *To Plato*. Aristides here takes up the defence of four statesmen who were talked down in Plato as rhetoricians, viz. Pericles, Cimon, Miltiades, and Themistocles. Near the end of this long oration (§ 688), we find the following interesting statement:

> So then we too do not dishonor philosophy, but we fight in defense of philosophy, as was reasonable. For I think that if Plato and Pythagoras themselves arose and found a sophist, they would place him somewhere far off, and so they would order these men to sit down and so it would be believed that they made a very fine decision on behalf of philosophy, in which they indeed removed those who burst in on it in revelry. And we do not in any way revile all philosophers, nor have we done so, but only those "scepterholders" to whom this is appropriate; and whoever understands our words will not be persuaded that they have been directed against Plato who will be the first of them to make the accusation. Indeed, in the

241 For a discussion of the publication date of the third and the fourth oration, see Flinterman (2000–2001), 35–36.

> matter of philosophy, I must purge their lewdness and drunkenness, as would be the case in any other such matter. And I think that I have studied with the best and most perfect of the philosophers of my time, and that in this respect I am not inferior to many mortals; and they have been like foster fathers to me. Therefore I should sooner wage war with my own household than with philosophers. Rather, let no such thing happen, but philosophy also owes a certain debt of gratitude to us.
>
> ARISTID. 3.688–690; transl.: C.A. BEHR

Aristides here explicitly points out that his defence of rhetoric is no assault on philosophy, but also a defence of philosophy. By arguing that he fights against the same sophistic perversions of philosophy as Plato and Pythagoras did, he puts himself in line with traditional philosophical authorities, and this against the 'wrong' scepterholders of philosophy who have denied the rhetorical character of philosophy. The final sentences of the passage establish Aristides' own ethos as a trustworthy speaker on philosophical affairs. By stating that he was educated by the best philosophers of his time, he indicates that he does not have to accept lessons from the self-proclaimed philosophers of his day as regards the status of rhetoric within the corpus of Plato and within the field of philosophy. Aristides thus turns his opponents' knives against them, accusing them of being no real philosophers after all, and perverters of true philosophy, which ought to save a place for rhetoric as well.

That this commitment to rhetoric flirts with philosophical commonplaces immediately becomes apparent from the following passage, in which Aristides asserts that he has sworn off all the lower impulses that could be associated with the pursuit of a rhetorical life in public, only cultivating the devotion to the higher good that comes from it (as philosophers often submit themselves to the higher truth):

> Beginning at that point to this day I have lived by devoting my time to studies and oratory, except when I was prevented by the requirements of health or by periods bringing misfortunes which were too great for the life which I had chosen. Still we survived even in these circumstances, clinging to our raft like a kind of Odysseus, since we did not sail alone, but under the protection of the greatest and most humane helmsman, who kept our boats from sinking. Alone of all the Greeks whom we know, we did not engage in oratory for wealth, reputation, honor, marriage, power, or any acquisition. But since we were its true lover, we were fittingly honored by oratory.
>
> ARISTID. 33.18–19; transl.: C.A. BEHR

As a cunning intellectual, Aristides appropriates philosophical *topoi* in order to gain intellectual credibility for his pursuit of the oratorical skills that philosophers of this era eagerly attribute to the field of sophistry. One final passage forms yet another illustration of his witty and self-conscious play with philosophical commonplaces. In §14 of his twenty-eighth oration *On a remark in passing*, which he composed as a defence against the accusation that he had praised himself in a previous declamation, Aristides luminously interprets the Delphic saying 'Know thyself' as 'Do not present thyself as inferior to what thou art', and 'Nothing in excess' as 'Neither too much nor too little', arguing that someone who is truly as good as he ought not to feel ashamed to praise himself, as so many others in history have done. Through this cunning reasoning, the traditional philosophical urge not to boast about one's talents and achievements has been put aside in favour of a self-conscious and shameless assertion of Aristides' own skill.

As regards Aristides' reception as a rhetorician, he seems to have had every reason to praise himself. During his life, and probably as a result of his physical weaknesses, he was probably not among the absolute top rank of his generation, even though the Emperor Marcus Aurelius did come to see him declaim.[242] After his death, however, he very soon became a canonized example of style in rhetorical handbooks.[243] He is generally praised for the meticulous and precise rhythmic language used in his texts, which resulted in a fame that he already anticipated by polishing his speeches to perfection during his life.[244] As for the philosophical underpinning of his work, he had many philosophical opponents, such as the already mentioned Capito, but also the third-century Neoplatonic philosopher Porphyry. In this peculiar manner, he left his own special mark on the history of Platonism.[245]

4.8 *Marcus Aurelius* (*121–180 CE*)

The combination of the active life of a Roman Emperor and the contemplative life of the Stoic philosopher culminates in the charismatic figure of Marcus Aurelius.[246] Biographies by Cassius Dio and in the *Historia Augusta* unanimously depict him as an excellent Emperor, under whose reign the greatest

242 A discussion of the at times puzzling reports on the meeting between Aristides and Marcus can be found in Papalas (1979).

243 See Rutherford (1998), 96–104.

244 See Aristid. 51.52.

245 See Moreschini (1994) and (2007).

246 The most complete account of Marcus' life and work can be found in Birley (1987).

amount of prosperity and well-being was reached. This is not to say, of course, that his reign was in all respects a blissful romp in paradise—after all, this period was far from peaceful and was even marked by a terrible plague—but it does indicate that the personality and policies of Marcus embodied in many respects an ideal that the Greco-Roman elite could relate to.

While Marcus' famous writings *To himself* depict an older Emperor calling himself to philosophical reflection, some sources enable us to reconstruct important parts of his earlier life. From Cassius Dio, we learn that Marcus had been trained both in rhetoric and in philosophical disputations,[247] thus combining two cornerstones of Greco-Roman education. Given the topical assumption that young age goes with youthful ambition and old age with ripe reflection, it would be tempting to consider Marcus' earlier career as more rhetorical than philosophical, but the *Historia Augusta* tell us that already by the age of twelve, he adopted the cloak of a philosopher and hardened himself by sleeping on the ground, which worried his mother.[248] Furthermore, his duties as an Emperor required him to operate continuously in public, during which performative speech delivery was a recurrent necessity. As a result, even though the balance of Marcus' interests may have gradually tipped over from rhetorical to philosophical concerns, both disciplines appear to have formed a constant presence in Marcus' life.[249]

Thanks to the discovery of a palimpsest by Angelo Mai, we fortunately have access to the correspondence between Marcus and his 'teacher'[250] of rhetoric, Marcus Cornelius Fronto, who was one of the leading authorities of his era concerning Latin word use and composition. On the basis of a reconstruction of the chronology of the letters,[251] we can see how the young Marcus showed himself an eager student of rhetoric, expressing his love for his teacher and seeking instruction on numerous occasions. If his self-reports are true, Marcus literally studied day and night[252] both philosophical and rhetorical literature. And this was not in vain, it seems; if there is some sense of sincerity shining

247 Cass.Dio. 72.35.1. See also H.A. *M.A.* 3.8.

248 H.A. *M.A.* 2.6.

249 Note that H.A. *M.A.* 1.1 depicts Marcus as an '*in omni vita philosophanti viro*'.

250 Fronto was not as much a teacher in the strict sense as a private citizen who gave advice to the Emperors Marcus and Lucius Verus as to what literature they should read, how they should estimate their readings, and which exercises to undertake in order to become a good public speaker. See Champlin (1980), 50.

251 See esp. Champlin (1974).

252 Front. *Ad.M.Caes.* 4.5.1 and 4.6; *De.fer.Als.* 3.7 sqq.

through Fronto's flattering words, Marcus appears to have been quite a talented orator who enchanted his master as well as many others.[253]

A letter that is traditionally associated with Marcus' 'conversion' to philosophy is *Ad.M.Caes*. 4.13, where Marcus revolts against his master of rhetoric by refusing to discuss matters *in utramque partem*, as Fronto has asked him to. As the main reason for this refusal, Marcus claims that it is no longer in correspondence with his convictions, as they have been formed by reading the work of Aristo (of Chios), whose effect on Marcus' psyche bears some resemblances with what Arrian ascribes to Epictetus' discourses.

> Ariston's books just now treat me well and at the same time make me feel ill. When they teach me a better way, then, I need not say, they treat me well; but when they show me how far short my character comes of this better way, time and time again does your pupil blush and is angry with himself, for that, twenty-five years old as I am, no draught has my soul yet drunk of noble doctrines and purer principles.
>
> M.A. in Front. *Ad.M.Caes*. 4.13; transl. C.R. HAINES

I estimate, against Edward Champlin[254] and with Pierre Hadot,[255] that this letter should be situated in a philosophical context, and that it does bear some relevance as regards Marcus' attitude towards rhetoric and philosophy. However, there is no sign of an absolute conversion, but rather of a gradual shift of interest in Marcus' mind. The urge to find an absolute breaking point in Marcus' life is quite symptomatic of the presumptions of earlier research, which desperately wanted to define one particular moment of 'conversion', since it was considered impossible that the devotion to both rhetoric and philosophy could synchronically coexist in one single person, and certainly not in a good Emperor like Marcus. In this respect, Tobias Kasulke's correction of this view,[256] emphasizing the factual overlaps and mutual tolerance between philosophy and rhetoric, is quite welcome, even though he is not entirely correct in assuming that the factual coexistence of these two fields in individuals automatically implies that the discursive struggles between rhetoric and philosophy have been put to rest. As our analysis of diverse figures of this era shows, the marriage

253 Front. *Ad.Ant.Imp*. 1.2. Note that, in M.A. 1.17.4 and 5.5, Marcus denies himself any such natural talent.

254 See Champlin (1974), 144, who is nevertheless less firm in Champlin (1980), 121.

255 See Hadot (1992), 12–14. For Aristo's influence on Marcus, see Roskam (2012).

256 See Kasulke (2005).

of philosophy and rhetoric was far from uncontested, and even the riper Marcus himself would eventually deny that rhetoric had occupied such an important place in his life (cf. *infra*).

In the struggle for Marcus' attention, however, Fronto did not give up the spoils to philosophy without a fight. In his essays *On elocution*, he tries to persuade Marcus not to turn his back on oratory as a result of his devotion to philosophy. Not unlike Dio and Plutarch, he argues that a statesman like Marcus needs eloquence in order to fulfil his duties (1.5 and *passim*). After a provocative assault on the inappropriateness of a philosophical life without rhetoric, Fronto, conscious of his audience, aims at a reconciliation between both fields, in which eloquence is portrayed as a companion of philosophy (1.18).[257] In order to justify these claims, Fronto elsewhere invokes the authority of Plato, whose usage of resonant periods shows that devotion to philosophy does not imply an absolute abandonment of rhetoric (3.2), given that there is an unbreakable connection between thoughts and phrasing (3.4–5).

Marcus' duties did indeed necessitate him to undertake public actions, but when we look at the reports of his life, it is hard to determine just how many of his deeds can be (partly) explained through his philosophical inclinations. Cassius Dio alludes to Marcus' general *philanthrôpia* in dealing with enemies,[258] while the *Historia Augusta* reports Marcus' tendency to be a milder judge than the normal punishment would require.[259] Such features could be provoked by Marcus' interest in Stoic philosophy, but they could equally well have been inspired by his urge to place himself in line with his great predecessors Hadrian and especially his adoptive father Antoninus Pius, who was much less of a philosopher than Marcus, but displayed a similarly mild and humble character, as Marcus himself notes.[260]

Despite these uncertainties as to the main sources of inspiration for Marcus' actions, Christopher Gill believes that philosophy did have a serious impact on Marcus' life in general, as it provided an intellectual framework that helped him define specific goals in life.[261] With this assessment, Gill opposes himself to the

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257 That is, if Heindorf's textual reconstruction to insert '*eloquentiam*' in connection with the extant '*comitem philosophiae*' is indeed correct.

258 Cass.Dio. 72.14.1, ironically in a context where Marcus' attitude towards Ariogaesus, the king of the Quadi, proves to be the exception to the general rule.

259 H.A. *M.A.* 24.

260 M.A. 1.17.3.

261 See Gill (2012). Gill's programmatic essay can be seen as the culmination of the interdisciplinary efforts to interpret Marcus' integral personality in Van Ackeren—Opsomer (eds.) (2012).

estimation of Graham Stanton, who argued for the incompatibility of Marcus' public life and his life as a philosopher.[262] Gill, for his part, argues convincingly for an integral view of Marcus' personality, in which philosophical reflection and political pragmatism went hand in hand.

This viewpoint is not at odds with traditional and Imperial philosophy. Plato already dreamt of the concept of the philosopher-king,[263] and the Stoic doctrines about *oikeiôsis* and the *kathêkonta* envision a synergy between the philosophical life of the individual, the social role of the philosopher *vis-à-vis* his fellow citizens, and the institutional duties attached to one's position in society.[264] Earlier, we already noticed how Dio and Plutarch present themselves in their literary work as communicating the ideals of the great and just statesman to influential people in their society, even to the Emperor Trajan himself. It seems that these philosophical discourses exerted a distinctive influence on Marcus Aurelius.

In a recent contribution to the study of Marcus, inspired by modern political and sociological theories, Claudia Horst interprets Marcus' self-presentation

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262 See Stanton (1969).

263 H.A. *M.A.* 27.7 reports that Marcus himself referred to Plato's utterance about the philosopher-king, which, if correct, means that he consciously modelled himself after this ideal. On the other hand, in his *Meditations*, he urges himself not to hope for an ideal Platonic state (9.29). I would argue, however, that this exhortation should be interpreted within Marcus' Stoic programme, typical of the intimate tone of the *Meditations*, to disregard everything over which one does not have control. As the remainder of the passage indicates, Marcus here urges himself to abandon the idea of a Platonic state because the achievement of it rests not solely on his own disposition. In other words, it seems as if Marcus implies that it is legitimate to wish for the Platonic state, but only for as far as it is in his own hands, which would imply that he could legitimately *aspire to* become a Platonic philosopher-king. Yet, inspired by the Stoic urge for simplicity, he avoids falling prey to the theatrical self-promotion of Alexander, Philip, and Demetrius of Phalerum, representing himself as someone who refrains from such self-praise. However, it seems that Marcus' main reproach for these people is that they actually believed themselves that they were philosopher-kings, while Marcus ascertains that he has a more modest self-conception. This does not imply, in my opinion, that he could not use the ideal of the Platonic philosopher-king as a propagandistic means while reminding himself, as a proper Stoic, that he has not reached the perfection that is required from such a philosopher-king. For these reasons, I argue that the rejection of the Platonic state is fully compatible with Marcus' philosophical goals in his *Meditations*, but does certainly not exclude the supposition that his public life and his public self-representation could have been modelled to a certain extent after the Platonic ideal.

264 See Reydams-Schils (2012). On the notion of *oikeiôsis*, with an application to Marcus' case, see Horst (2013), 56–83.

as a philosopher (partly) as a strategic adoption of the ideals that the Greco-Roman elite of the Imperial era had been proclaiming for several generations.[265] Embodying these ideals could serve as a mechanism to bring stability to the relationship between the Emperor and the high-class citizens of the Roman Empire. In a sense, with her approach, Horst turns the traditional picture of an Emperor determining the agenda of the elite on its head, showing how the expectations of the elite actually shaped the ideal to which the Emperor decided to conform himself. One of the main virtues of this thesis is that it allows Horst to walk the middle ground between a pragmatic picture of Marcus and an idealistic one. After all, his strategic self-representation as a stabilizing factor in the Empire does neither exclude the plausible assumption that he actually did experience some sincere influence of philosophical thoughts and doctrines on his actions, nor does it prevent us from believing in the sincerity of Marcus' devotion to philosophy, as he himself seems to report it in the later stages of his life.

Indeed, to literary critics and philosophers alike, Marcus is no doubt best known for his meditations *To himself*, a work which he wrote during his military campaign against the Marcomanni in the later stages of his life. The work appears to be less a self-advertising exposition than a set of personal notes, designed so as to exercise the author's mind in philosophical (and primarily Stoic) thinking and living.[266] This personal use of notes is not unparalleled in the Imperial world—think of Plutarch and Gellius—and would also explain why no author from Marcus' own time seems to mention this remarkable document. The work *To himself* testifies to Marcus' search for a meaningful life on a philosophical basis. Marcus does not come out as a rigid school philosopher, but his rejection of certain technical aspects of (philosophical) knowledge such as logic and physics (cf. 1.17.8) does not automatically make him a lesser philosopher, since his attitude may also be interpreted as a search for the core of the simple philosophical life.[267] Marcel Van Ackeren speaks in this context of "*einen Minimalismus*" and "*eine Reduktion in der Philosophie*."[268] Even though Marcus is constantly prepared to emphasize to himself that he is far from a prototypical philosopher and that he has far too little time to study philosophy (e.g., 8.1), his subsequent reception appears to judge otherwise. In

265 See Horst (2013).

266 See Brunt (1974), 1–5. For an accessible general study of the meditations, see Rutherford (1991).

267 See Gourinat (2012).

268 Van Ackeren (2011), vol. 2, 603.

fact, his humility *vis-à-vis* what he calls true philosophers and his refusal to apply the title of 'philosopher' to himself is well in line with his attempt to avoid idle conceit and public acclamation (see, for example, 6.13, 6.16.2–3, 7.6, and above all 12.27), and may thus testify to the philosophical progress he believes himself to have already made in the course of his life.

His assessment of rhetoric is well in line with the general avoidance of conceit. Marcus expresses his explicit contentment at the fact that the gods granted him that he was not introduced into the field of philosophy by a sophist (1.17.8). The abusive term 'sophist' is in this context used in its Platonic sense of a charlatan who competes with philosophers for their socio-cultural prestige, and Marcus' subsequent discourse about rhetoric in general points to his belief that, *at least for himself*, rhetoric turned out to bear no specific relevance with regard to a happy life. In order to clarify this negative estimation of rhetoric in Marcus' meditations, it is important to bear in mind that Marcus composed his musings towards the end of his life, and that he was apparently prepared to downplay the importance of the rhetorical studies which he underwent earlier, if only because people generally tend to construct a more favourable self-image in line with the values they cherish at that particular moment. This is how we can explain that *To himself* is full of rejections of the field of rhetoric, despite the earlier eagerness he displayed towards his master Fronto. Marcus does not go so far as to not include Fronto amongst those who had a great influence on him, but, quite tellingly, he thanks Fronto for his advice concerning the life in the courts rather than for his rhetorical instructions (1.11). His philosophical teacher Rusticus, for his part, is thanked because he taught Marcus to eschew rhetoric, poetry, and fine language (1.7). Rusticus also receives commendations from Marcus for having brought him into contact with the recordings of Epictetus' Stoic teachings by Arrian, no doubt a great influence on Marcus' Stoic thoughts, even though the degree to which this influence can be traced in *To himself* is a matter of scholarly dispute.[269]

Marcus' scornful attitude toward rhetoric also emerges in his assertions that nine out of ten words and deeds are unnecessary (4.24), that the shortest way in speech and act is the way of Nature (4.51), and that he should use sound speech in the Senate (8.30). It is probably no coincidence that this 'natural' way of talking seems to correspond with the Stoic modes of discourse of a Seneca or an Epictetus, whose aphoristic brevity sets itself apart from the rhythmic and

269 Hadot's (1992) main thesis is that Epictetus' tripartite division of Stoic training into assent, desire, and action can also be found in Marcus' work. Van Ackeren (2011), for his part, rejects this point and offers a more detailed analysis of themes and structure instead.

extensive periods advocated by the rhetorical tradition.[270] As we will see later, it also resembles the common-sense use of discourse as advocated by the Pyrrhonian Sceptic Sextus Empiricus. If we are to believe Marcus' self-assessment, he gradually learned that the requirements of rhetoric, such as brute talent and wit, did not come naturally to him (see, for example, 1.17.4 and 5.5), and that his natural inclination pulled him towards the field of philosophy.

On the basis of the utterances in his meditations, one would expect that Marcus did not care for rhetorical performers and sophists any more in the later stage of his life. Nevertheless, Philostratus informs us about Marcus' tour in the East, which he undertook after the Marcomannic wars, and during which he appears to have attended some grand verbal performances. In Smyrna, he insisted on seeing Aelius Aristides, who kept the Emperor waiting for no less than three days, claiming that he was meditating on a certain topic and did not want to disturb his thinking.[271] From these recordings, it becomes apparent that even though Marcus' personal notes suggest a plain rejection of rhetorical skills, his public life at the same time testifies to an overt interest in Greek learning, not just in the field of philosophy, but also in the field of rhetorical declamation. How much of this was strategy, and how much is true interest, is hard to verify, but there is no reason to assume that Marcus' attitude in *To himself* prevented him from lending his official support to the great performers from the East.

The Emperor Hadrian had already installed an official chair for rhetoric in Athens,[272] which went along with a considerable stipend. When Marcus visited Athens in 176, he extended this post with similar chairs for all other domains of learning,[273] including four chairs for the traditional philosophical schools Platonism, Aristotelianism, Stoicism, and Epicurianism.

There are a number of interesting implications of this instalment. Firstly, by creating an official spokesperson of each respective philosophical school, Marcus reinstalled a firm authoritative centre of doctrinal issues within each of these schools. The holders of these chairs may not have been equalled to their grand predecessors such as Plato, Aristotle, Zeno, or Epicurus, but they at least enjoyed the official support of the Roman Emperor.

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270 Note how, in the tenth book of his *Institutio oratoria*, Quintilian proves himself a fierce opponent of the language of Seneca.

271 See Phil. *VS*. 582–583. Gascó (1989) makes an interesting suggestion as to the true reason for Aristides' reluctance to see the Emperor, on the basis of Aristides' alleged role in the revolt of Avidius Cassius.

272 For a discussion of people holding this prestigious chair, see Avotins (1975).

273 Cass.Dio. 72.31.3.

Secondly, the teachers of philosophy were given a salary of 10,000 drachmae a year, which was much more than just a symbolic gesture.[274] While this sum may have added to the attraction of philosophy in wider circles, showing that philosophical commitment can be combined with economical prosperity, it submitted the field of philosophy to social, political, economical, and communal life. It also contributed to an obvious narrowing of the gap between sophists and philosophers. While the second-century lexicographer Pollux typically defines sophists on the basis of their acceptance of money for their teachings, and reserves no such semantic connotation for philosophers,[275] the prime representatives of the philosophical schools in Athens received an annual amount of money that was so large that it could put this obvious traditional difference under pressure. Later, we will see in the discussion of Lucian's work how the *Eunuch* uses the theme of the official chairs in philosophy to depict philosophers—in this case Aristotelians—as pragmatists who are indeed driven by the salary.

Finally, if we are to believe Philostratus,[276] the man responsible for the first election of the chairs of philosophy was the famous statesman, man of learning, and sophist Herodes Atticus. We know from Gellius that Herodes did take an interest in philosophy,[277] and that he is critical of people who adopt the outlook of a philosopher without being one.[278] Yet his image in Gellius' *Attic nights* and his life as narrated by Philostratus give us no reason to suppose that he was a rigid school philosopher, and it is hard to avoid the impression that his devotion to sophistic learning and rhetorical performances eventually prevailed over his commitment to a specific philosophical school. In any case, unlike Favorinus, he is not labelled as a philosopher by Gellius. The fact that such a person was put in charge of the attribution of the chairs illustrates the artificial character of Marcus' programmatic action. The head of the respective schools were not organically chosen by the representatives of each respective school, but elected by an authority outside of the school itself.

274 See Phil. *VS*. 566.

275 See Poll. 4.42–43.

276 See, again, Phil. *VS*. 566.

277 See, for instance, Gell. 1.2, where Herodes rebukes a student's behaviour by giving a recitation of a passage of Arrian's account of Epictetus' speeches, and Gell. 19.12, where he rejects the principle of apathy.

278 Gell. 9.2 attributes the famous quote to him: "I see a beard and a cloak, yet a philosopher I do not see." This (dis)connection between philosophical appearance and inner reality is obviously a *topos*, which has been incorporated into a Plutarchan cluster. See Van der Stockt (2004), *passim*.

All in all, Marcus' reign no doubt contributed to an increase of interest in philosophy. Both his institutional and personal actions testify to some sincere moral care, but he was not unaware of his institutional role as an Emperor, which urged him to keep up with public life, the study of rhetoric, and the concerns of the aristocratic rulers of local communities, for whom sophistic performances were an important part of their communal identities. In the maze of his musings, letters, acts, and biographies, it remains difficult to determine just how much pleasure he derived from sophistic performances, how much rhetoric he allowed himself to indulge in, and how tragic he estimated his own fate, divided as he was between his philosophical inclinations and his Imperial duties.

4.9 *Lucian of Samosata (ca. 125–after 180 CE)*

Even though Lucian is nowadays one of the most famous intellectuals from this list, in his own day he did not seem to have reached the prime status of a Plutarch or a Galen. Despite his career as a declaiming sophist, apparent from some typical sophistic expositions (often introductions) that are extant in Lucian's oeuvre, only little mention of him is made in contemporary authors, and Philostratus does not mention him in his biographies. Nevertheless, Lucian appears from his own writings as a learned *pepaideumenos* and a versatile author, displaying an extensive knowledge of Greek literature and language.[279] The way in which he put his *paideia* to use in his socio-cultural world, however, is quite different from his contemporaries. A Syrian from birth, Lucian consciously dwells upon his non-Greek origin in order to develop an authorial voice outside the prototypically 'Greek' sophistic and philosophical world of his day. This outsider position gives him the opportunity to satirize vices common to the intellectual circles of the Roman Empire, which makes him a valuable yet continuously protean and puzzling voice in his socio-cultural climate. In the process, he also shows himself to be a creative mouthpiece of the Greek tradition, transforming genres such as the plays of the Old Comedy and the Platonic philosophical dialogue into vehicles of serio-comical castigations of contemporary excesses in the fields of, among others, sophistry, rhetoric, and philosophy.

279 The most extensive and complete discussion of Lucian's work is still Bompaire (1958). For general studies in Lucian and his world, see also Baldwin (1973), Anderson (1976), Hall (1981), and Jones (1986). Whitmarsh (2001) argues for a deconstructionist Lucian, whose irony simply undercuts any form of certainty and authority.

As a result of this outsider position, it is very hard to pin down the historical Lucian on the basis of his writings. Are his humorous alter egos impersonations of his actual viewpoints? We cannot know for sure. Still, given the philosophical and rhetorical conventions of his day, we may assume that some of the satirical stances that Lucian performs in his works are informed by actual concurrent paradigms of philosophy. Therefore, even if the historical Lucian cannot be equated with his characters, his satirical personae offer valuable information concerning the discursive reality in which the author operated.

When we examine common strategies in Lucian's work, his satirical practices seem to have felt a considerable influence from concurrent philosophies, so much so that they may aspire to a certain amount of philosophical authority themselves. In some of his works, Lucian seems to authorize his works by means of the Cynical tradition, as he portrays himself as a pupil of the Cynic[280] philosopher Demonax, whose significant life events are narrated in the Lucianic work that bears his name. While a superficial reading of this set of anecdotes could mistakenly interpret it as composed solely for comical purposes, the Cynical tradition, apparent for instance in the numerous *chreiai* about Diogenes of Sinope, shows that this witty way of dealing with concrete social situations was considered to be well in line with proper philosophy.

Cynicism was famous for its rejection of social hierarchies, and prided itself on its use of free speech in each and every situation. For as far as his alter egos may serve as a mouthpiece for the author's literary self-fashioning, Lucian self-consciously places himself in this tradition of free speech. In *The dead come alive, or the fisherman*, Lucian tellingly stages an alias called Parrhesiades ('Frankness') who is being accused for mocking philosophers of all sorts in his work *Philosophies for sale*. Parrhesiades' main defence consists of the demonstration of his care for the truth, which he does not hide from others despite its biting tone. The ground for his satire on philosophical stereotypes, so he argues, is to be sought in the various perversions of philosophy by the charlatans, which he feels compelled to expose because of his love for the truth.

Lucian's interest in Cynicism does not stop there, as becomes apparent from the important influence of the third-century (BCE) Cynic satirist Menippus of Gadara on his work.[281] Menippus is the main character in Lucian's works

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280 Luc. *Dem.* 5 asserts that Demonax combined several philosophical paradigms, and never made clear which one he favoured, but the overall public appearance of Demonax seems to be overtly inspired by Cynical examples. Note also that in § 21, Peregrinus rebukes Demonax for not being a Cynic, which at least implies that he did have some adherence to that school, for otherwise the rebuke would be too self-evident to make.

281 See Helm (1906); Hall (1981), 64–150; and Branham (1989), 14–28.

Menippus (concerning Menippus' voyage to hell in order to receive philosophical advice) and *Icaromenippus* (concerning a 'flying' Menippus who went to the Olympus only to discover that the home of the gods is in accordance with poetic descriptions, rather than with philosophical doctrines). Yet his influence on Lucian goes further than these mere appearances, as Menippus' style of mixing serious and comic matters has been a major source of inspiration for Lucian's own mockery of contemporary vices in the cultural system.[282]

The *Menippus* and *Icaromenippus* also bear witness to another philosophical tendency in Lucian, which quite naturally results from his continuous satirical stance. Again, as with Favorinus and Plutarch, we are talking about Scepticism. The plurality of philosophical doctrines defended by several schools gives the satirist ample opportunity to deploy a popularizing brand of Sceptical detachment, which consists of a suspicious gaze at those schools and individuals who claim to embody an absolute truth. In both the *Menippus* and the *Icaromenippus*, Menippus' journey is set in motion by his dissatisfaction with the philosophical doctrines of his era and their mutual incompatibility. In the *Menippus*, this dissatisfaction is ultimately resolved by Tiresias, who, in the spirit of common Cynical and Sceptical beliefs, proclaims that the life of the ordinary people is the most advisable, while the *Icaromenippus* describes how Menippus discovers that the home of the gods is actually exactly like the poets describe, and totally unlike philosophical hypotheses.

While both these works still contain some sort of doctrinal resolution that does not allow for a continuous suspension of judgement, Lucian's *Hermotimus* is the most consistent example of a Lucianic alter ego's commitment to a popular kind of Scepticism.[283] In the dialogue, Lycinus interrogates the older student of philosophy, Hermotimus, concerning the latter's progress in philosophy, which he believes to be making according to Stoic doctrine. Like a true Socrates, and with typically Sceptical argumentation techniques called 'tropes', Lycinus gradually undermines the foundation of Hermotimus' philosophical

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282 Other works in Lucian's corpus that display Cynic themes and interests include Luc. *Cyn.* (probably not from his hand), *Gall.* (for the praise of poverty, even though it could be argued that Pythagorism is the main frame of reference here), *JConf.* (see Bosman (2012), with an extensive bibliography on Cynicism and its relation to Lucian), *JTr.*, and *Cat.* (in the last three, Lucian's alter ego Cyniscus (!) plays a prominent role).

283 See Prächter (1892); Nesselrath (1992); and von Möllendorff (ed.) (2000), 197–210, who argues nevertheless that Lycinus also argues from within the Stoic tradition, not solely as a Sceptical outsider. Von Möllendorff's interpretation is shown, however, to be fairly far-fetched in Nesselrath (2001).

commitment, to such an extent that the interlocutors arrive at an impasse that thoroughly questions the very instructions in which Hermotimus has, up to that point, believed.

Apart from the programmatic undermining of the truth claims of philosophical schools, Lucian also takes on the characters of the self-proclaimed philosophers of his era, and mockingly shows how they combine their lofty truth claims with a dishonourable and arrogant behaviour that is in no respect compatible with their moral principles. The most obvious place where the discrepancy between philosophical theory and practice is exposed is in the *Carousal, or the Lapiths*, in which Lycinus (again the same alias) describes the feast he attended at the occasion of the marriage of Aristaenetus' daughter. Many esteemed philosophers are present at the party, for Aristaenetus is a man interested in culture and spends his time, it appears, with philosophers of all the prominent schools (§ 10). Throughout the description of the feast, however, we witness the emergence of the less elevated side of these philosophers' characters, which becomes apparent in their hot tempers, avarice (even over food, which Plato nevertheless labelled as flattery of the body),[284] jealousy, and idle laughter at each other's expense. All this is narrated with some playful naivety on Lycinus' part, who portrays himself as an observer of the events with an increasing sense of amazement, and whose ironical commentary questions the very purpose of the learning that he sees embodied in these despicable individuals.

> While all this was going on, Philo, various thoughts were in my mind; for example, the very obvious one that it is no good knowing the liberal arts if one doesn't improve his way of living too. At any rate, the men I have mentioned, though clever in words, were getting laughed at, I saw, for their deeds. And then I could not help wondering whether what everyone says might not after all be true, that education leads men away from right thinking, since they persist in having no regard for anything but books and the thoughts in them. At any rate, there was not a single one to be seen who was devoid of fault, but some acted disgracefully and some talked still more disgracefully.
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> LUC. *Symp.* 34; transl.: A.M. HARMON

284 Pl. *Gorg.* 464d. Notice how, in *Par.*, Lucian, as a comedic commentary on the quarrel between rhetoric and philosophy over their alleged 'artfulness', presents a parasite who defends his practice as an 'art' in its own right.

In his analysis of the dialogue, Bracht Branham brilliantly shows how the work extracts its humour from the parody of Plato's *Symposium*—a much imitated and revered work among Imperial writers—and the grotesque interplay with Homeric allusions and patterns in the description of the actual fighting scene, ironically embellishing the base behaviour of the philosophers with the flair of an epic battle.[285] As Branham aptly argues, the Lucianic parody is only made possible through the established reputation of philosophy in the Imperial era, a situation that is entirely different from the context in which Plato wrote his programmatic philosophical works.

In the *Eunuch*, Lucian dwells upon the competition that arose over the four chairs of philosophy installed by Marcus Aurelius. The work is a dialogue between Lycinus and Pamphilus, the case in point is the election of the Peripatetic teacher of philosophy, and the main dispute is between Diocles and Bagoas, a eunuch. Bagoas' status as a eunuch seems to have been the most important point of the discussion, which invites Lycinus to mockingly comment how these Peripatetics lower themselves to the point where philosophy becomes less a matter of honourable practice and accomplished reasoning, than of the mere possession of testicles and a penis. As in the *Carousal*, philosophers are shown as not being able to live up to their high moral principles, and quarrelling over meaningless themes such as genitals and money, rather than important doctrinal issues.

Lucian's *Nigrinus* may also be read as a humorous comment on the dynamics that characterized the philosophical field in Lucian's day. The dialogue between two anonymous speakers (one of which is usually identified with Lucian himself, but this is far from certain)[286] narrates how one of them has become swayed by the philosophical speech of the Platonist philosopher Nigrinus.[287]

285 See Branham (1989), 104–123. Nesselrath (2012) notes that Lucian avoids the term *philotimia* to depict the philosophers because that would imply too positive an appreciation from Lucian's part, which would undermine the ironical communication with the reader.

286 In fact, it is never made explicit that Lucian is the converted speaker in the dialogue. However, since the scholarly tradition has generally assumed that Lucian is the main character (on the basis of the introductory letter to Nigrinus), and because it makes it possible to make an easy distinction between the first and the second speaker of the dialogue, I simply follow the traditional view. See however, Schröder (2000), 439: "(…) *allerdings ist dabei zu beachten, daß der Bekehrte nicht namentlich identifiziert ist*."

287 The identity of Nigrinus (as a real person, as a pseudonym, or as a fictional character) is a much-debated topic. An overview of the positions of older scholars is given in Mesk (1913), 24 sqq. A more recent state of the art can be found in Hall (1981), 157–164 (who herself does not doubt the historicity of the philosopher Nigrinus). For the identification of Nigrinus

Nigrinus' speech itself (§§12–34), which is performed *in extenso* by the converted self-proclaimed philosopher, is not much more than a banal amalgam of popular-philosophical commonplaces,[288] which makes a reader wonder why Nigrinus managed to have such a great impact on his initial listener. The framing dialogue, however, seems to show that this philosophical attitude can result in a mode of social distinction. The converted speaker apparently set himself apart from the common run, but when he is asked to perform Nigrinus' words for his interlocutor, he cannot help but being overcome by the base feeling of shame. This is then, again, interpreted by the latter as a modest rhetorical commonplace. It seems as if the receiver of the message is missing the point of the philosophical message, as he is prepared to give a typically sophistic audience response in the form of clapping and shouting (§10), a type of response which Plutarch labels as entirely inappropriate for a philosophical lecture.[289] Quite tellingly, after the re-performance of Nigrinus' speech, it is only after the converted speaker argues that one needs a specific type of personality to be capable of being struck by a philosophical message of Nigrinus' sort, that the listener affirms that he too is captured by these philosophical words (§35–38), using the former's conceptual metaphor that is clearly reminiscent of Sappho's famous poem about the disintegration of her body as a result of love (which indicates that both these interlocutors were not prepared to abandon their *paideia* altogether).[290] However, the swiftness with which this

as Albinus or Alcinoüs, see Tarrant (1985). Clay (1992) remains rather vague about the actual existence of the philosopher Nigrinus, merely asserting that Nigrinus is "philosophy personified" (3424). For a sophisticated interpretation of Nigrinus as a fictional invention of Lucian, see Schröder (2000). For the tantalizing force of the (ambiguous) narrative in Lucian's *Nigrinus*, see the analysis in Whitmarsh (2001), 265–279.

288 Nigrinus' speech, which contains some large sections condemning social life in Rome, bears some obvious resemblances with Roman satire, and most conspicuously with Juvenal's third satire. See the thorough study by Mesk (1912) and (1913). See also Bompaire (1958), 509–511; Anderson (1976), 85–89; and Jones (1986), 84–87. For the satirical character of the dialogue, see Anderson (1978), 374. See also Anderson (1976), 83–84: "Lucian recounts his own 'conversion' in *Nigrinus* in a manner which makes it very difficult to see what he has really been converted to"; Robinson (1979), 52–54; and Clay (1992), 3423.

289 See Plut. *Aud.* 45F–46C. For this text and for other comparable texts from the Imperial period, see Trapp (2009), 119–121. For a more general discussion of gestures and acclamation in ancient Rome, see Aldrete (1999), esp. 101–127.

290 Cf. Trapp (2009), 123: "Lucian delights in teasing [philosophers] by showing that there is a further level at which their designs to be doctors of the soul can still be diverted and frustrated. Even when the *logos* is let through to the soul, and shakes it up, that experience too can be turned to the ends of pleasure."

second conversion has taken place[291] raises immediate question marks over its seriousness, especially in the light of some philosophers like Dio or Epictetus, who appear to cherish a model of philosophical conversion as a slow and painful process which takes much longer than a couple of minutes of listening. On the basis of these textual elements, the *Nigrinus* should be placed amongst those works that display Lucian's playful methods to show the discrepancies and frustrations that determined the cultural field in which he was operating.

Another Lucianic technique to undermine the authority of philosophers of his era is inspired by Old Comedy. In *Runaway slaves*, and *The dead come alive, or the fisherman*, we encounter the personification of Philosophy herself, who rebukes the very people who claim to embody her. Through this literary device, Lucian pointedly aggrandizes his witty satire on contemporary philosophers with the highest authority imaginable, the very object of the dispute. However, there is also something even more tantalizing about the depiction of Philosophy as a literary character. While such personification starts from the assumption that there is a possibility to essentialize philosophy, the literary vehicle of the dialogue, in which literary characters only appear as written texts and only show from themselves as much as the author allows them to, refrains from any firm and positive definition of the true appearance of Philosophy. Philosophy is thus primarily defined in a negative fashion, as entirely different from the dogmatic accounts of the rivalling philosophical schools of Lucian's era. This literary technique lends itself quite naturally to the destabilization of the confident voices of contemporary philosophers of all sorts without forcing the author himself to come up with his own particular definition of philosophy. Whether or not this satirist stance is ultimately influenced by Lucian's interest in Sceptical thought is hard to determine, but the indubitable result of it is that the reader remains thoroughly compelled to speculate about the actual appearance of Philosophy, and this both as a literary character in Lucian's satire and in a more profound metaphysical sense.

As has just been mentioned, in *Runaway Slaves*, Lucian (through the mouth of Philosophy) exposes the manifest problem of philosophical imposters, which is that superficial appearance does not necessarily reflect one's inner state:

291 Note that, in *Nigr*. 1, the second interlocutor already alluded to the quickness of the first one's conversion through the contact with Nigrinus. What then to say about the *second* conversion, of which we become witness as the dialogue progresses?

> What characterizes us [i.e. Philosophy] is very easily attainable, as you know, and open to imitation—I meant what meets the eye. (…) Moreover, [these charlatans] discerned, I assume, the further advantage that they would be on equal footing with true philosophers, and that there would be nobody who could pass judgment and draw distinctions in such matters, if only the externals were similar.
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> LUC. *Fug.* 14–15; transl.: A.M. HARMON

This passage[292] aptly illustrates that the perception of there being a lack of foundation for the demarcation between true philosophers and clever charlatans is not only or even merely a modern scholarly problem or obsession, but actually reflects the problematic relation between true devotion and mere appearance that was all but present in the Imperial era itself.

Another place where the hypocrisy of contemporary would-be philosophers is castigated is *On salaried posts*. In this invective, written as a letter to Timocles, Lucian complains about learned Greeks who allow themselves to be hired by wealthy Romans, thus dropping their independence and self-worth. In an instructive passage, Lucian argues that, once one attaches oneself to a patron, one cannot control one's own reception, in as much as someone who truly believes that he is a philosopher becomes an instrument in a *parvenu* ostentation of superficial culture.

> To be sure, the purpose for which he engaged you, saying that he wanted knowledge, matters little to him; for, as the proverb says, 'What has a jackass to do with a lyre?' Ah, yes, can't you see? They are mightily consumed with longing for the wisdom of Homer or the eloquence of Demosthenes or the sublimity of Plato, when, if their gold and their silver and their worries about them should be taken out of their souls, all that remains is pride and softness and self-indulgence and sensuality and insolence and ill-breeding! Truly, he does not want you for that purpose at all, but as you have a long beard, present a distinguished appearance, are neatly dressed in a Greek mantle, and everybody knows you for a grammarian or a rhetorician or a philosopher, it seems to him the proper thing to have a man of that sort among those who go before him and form his escort; it will make people think him a devoted student of Greek learning and

292 See also Luc. *Herm.* 68: "Then do you not think it a very laborious business to separate and differentiate those who know from those who do not know but say they know?" (transl.: A.M. Harmon); and *Pisc.* 31–42, where it is also observed that the charlatans are not seldom more convincing even than the true philosophers.

> in general a person of taste in literary matters. So chances are, my worthy friend, that instead of your marvellous lectures it is your beard and mantle you have let for hire.
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> LUC. *Merc.Cond.* 25; transl.: A.M. HARMON

We here appear to get a glimpse at a *parvenu* culture where superficial appearance threatens to take over the field of cultured education. Especially for a practice like philosophy, which, at least for Lucian, tends to cherish some sense of truthful authenticity, the involvement in such an economy of learning is fairly problematic, as it misses the point of what it actually is to become a philosopher. Yet the judgement of an outsider like Lucian does not automatically imply that these Roman people did not think of *themselves* as truly educated. We should be careful not to confuse a less devoted treatment of philosophy with malice and bad intention; according to some other, less stringent definition of philosophy, the practices castigated by Lucian could be seen as thoroughly contributing to a wealthy Roman's symbolic capital (we will come back to this point when we are talking about the addressees and the purpose of Maximus of Tyre's *dialexeis*).

For someone operating in the public realm and aspiring to cultural authority, it is hard to stay away from the suspicion of being unable to live up to one's own words, especially if these words tend to be quite biting and aggressive towards other people. For as far as the *Apology for the treatise 'On salaried posts'* reveals something about his own position in society, Lucian forms no exception. In this work, he defends himself against the accusation of hypocrisy, after he has accepted a salaried public service in Egypt. Lucian argues that there is a large difference between what he does—accepting a public service installed by the state—and what others do—working for private individuals. However, it remains unclear to what extent Lucian actually succeeded in convincing his readers that he was anything different from the other *pepaideumenoi* who turned their learning into financial gain. It turns out that even a satirist like Lucian was not free from such suspicions.

On the basis of the discussion above, it becomes clear that Lucian himself, even if he eagerly tends to assume the outsider position of the satirist, is far from a disinterested party in the dynamics of philosophy of his era. Yet, while his contemporaries are often depicted as brainless and slavish followers of simple definitions and precepts, his own literary personae cunningly weasel themselves out of any firm positioning. Moreover, the author hiding behind this wealth of alter egos becomes all the more difficult to pin down.

Is Lucian, then, rather a lover of the sophistic world of his day? Again, as with philosophy, this question ought to be treated with care. A brief examination

of some of his satires teaches us that he, again inspired by his programmatic frankness, does not shy away from satirically criticizing some practices that are characteristic (or at least *potentially* characteristic) of his sophistic world. In his *Teacher of rhetoric*, he impersonates a figure who claims to be able to teach his pupils to become accomplished orators without any effort.[293] By pointing out some clever coping strategies, the teacher shows a mercilessly economical attitude towards true learning, claiming that it can easily be imitated on the basis of some superficial niceties. In his work about an *Ignorant book collector*, Lucian attacks a would-be intellectual who pursues and collects many books without knowing what is actually in them. Lucian pointedly argues that *paideia* is all about knowledge, and not about the possession of books. In the dialogue *Lexiphanes*, finally, Lucian refutes the affected use of overly austere ancient vocabulary by Lexiphanes, thus demonstrating that even the hyperarchaic Atticism that was very popular in the Imperial era has its own limits of propriety.

These accusations of sophistic practices may seem remarkable, since Lucian is himself also the composer of sophistic declamations, some of which are still extant in his oeuvre. Yet the same reasoning applies as for philosophy. Lucian does not so much deny that there is a proper way of partaking in the rhetorical world of his era, as he castigates the excesses of those who believe that *paideia* is merely a matter of easy mimicry or over-the-top cultivation of an affected vocabulary. Yet again, as with philosophy, good taste and the avoidance of charlatanic behaviour form the primary recipe for practices that can at least partly gain Lucian's approval.

Most likely having some philosophical aspirations himself, Lucian would almost certainly not have taken pride in the title of sophist. In this context, it is telling that Philostratus does not rank him amongst the sophists whose lives he narrates, and Lucian's own work, while being quite tolerant to the field of rhetoric—if done properly—testifies to the author's reluctance to name himself a sophist. Discursively speaking, Lucian self-consciously buys into the philosophical (and thus anti-sophistic) repertoire, in that he quite often uses sophistry as a term of abuse, even for people who are traditionally regarded as philosophers.[294] As with Aristides, this self-positioning should probably be

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293 See Cribiore (2007).

294 See, e.g., Luc. *Dem.* 12, where Demonax accuses Favorinus of being a sophist; *JConf.* 19, where Zeus, in a philosophical discussion about the gods, labels his cunning opponent Cyniscus (another Lucianic alter ego) as a sophist; *Vit.Auct.* 12, where Hermes calls the Cyrenaeic life a '*sophistês hêdupatheias*'; *Prom.* 4 and 20, where Hermes calls Prometheus a sophistic speech-maker; *Peregr.* 13 and 32, where the label sophist is applied to the

understood as a further demonstration of his devotion to the field of philosophy, which ought to grant him the aura of a thoughtful intellectual who surpasses the mere sophists of his day.

All in all, underlying the Lucianic satire of the rhetorical and philosophical deviations that he sees around him, there appears to be a belief in the essential merits of these two domains, merits which may not seem as obvious, given his swift variations between discursive frameworks. Flexibly and swiftly positioning himself in both the rhetorical and the philosophical fields of his day, and arguing that many of the self-proclaimed representatives of each respective field are in fact mere imposters, he can also end up being accused of belonging to neither. His work *The double indictment* is a self-staged example of precisely this liminal position. Even though the accused is only named the 'Syrian', the identification with Lucian's own literary persona seems to suggest itself quite cogently. This Syrian is accused by both Rhetoric and Philosophy, with Justice as the judge. Rhetoric takes on the Syrian for having abandoned her for Philosophy, and Philosophy in her turn complains about the fact that the Syrian uses the dialogue for comical purposes, which runs counter to its honourable philosophical cause.[295] In his—apparently successful—defence, the Syrian shows himself an heir of both traditions, but also a versatile innovator who refuses to be pigeonholed into one single category. The forensic context, combined with the personification of the abstract Justice, gives Lucian a neat opportunity to proclaim his belief that, in the contemporary quarrels over his alleged violations of propriety in both fields, he appears to have Justice itself on his side. In his own person, we thus appear to witness—at least in Lucian's opinion—the fruitful coexistence of rhetorical and philosophical tendencies, which are neatly blended together in his satirical writings.

Lucian's versatile voice, which pertains to matters of cultural identity, plays an illuminating role in the debate between philosophers, rhetoricians, and sophists. The shifting tone between individual dialogues lures the reader into a discursive maze, but the multiple perspectives throughout the work cannot—even if they wanted to—conceal Lucian's own claims to socio-cultural authority. At once engaging in and composing satires on his socio-cultural climate, he cunningly exposes and exploits the weak spots of the established fields of knowledge that are generally revered within the context of the Roman Empire. His humorous work, constantly playing with the dynamics of the

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Cynic leader Peregrinus (not liked overmuch by Lucian); and *Tim.* 10, where Zeus calls Anaxagoras a sophist because he does not honour the gods.

295 For an extensive discussion of the dialogue in Lucian, see Ureña Bracero (1995).

spoudaiogeloion, offers a unique perspective on the on-going ambitions, struggles, frustrations, and anxieties of his era.

4.10 *Apuleius of Madaurus (ca. 125–ca. 180 CE)*

Apuleius in all likelihood qualifies as the closest Latin parallel of the Greek Second Sophistic movement. Born in the Numidian city of Madaurus (in modern Algeria), he travelled around the Roman world and combined the pursuit of philosophical knowledge with the verbosity of a rhetorical performer. His literary oeuvre comprises philosophical works as well as a novel, a self-defence in court, and an anthology of his most thrilling verbal performances. Along with authors such as Gellius and Fronto, his case shows that the combination of philosophy, overall education, and grand verbal display was not confined to the Greek-speaking population of the Roman era, but extended to Latin-speaking intellectuals as well.

Like many representatives of the Greek world, Apuleius' self-presentation as an intellectual is also that of a confident philosopher. He presents himself as a self-styled philosopher and *pepaideumenos*, and his *Apology* testifies to his aim of creating a bond of kinship with Claudius Maximus, the proconsul of Africa and apparently also an aficionado of culture, who functioned as the judge during a trial in which Apuleius was accused of having used magic in order to persuade an older widow, named Pudentilla, to marry him.[296] The accusers, for their part, family members of the older woman who were after Pudentilla's money, are depicted by Apuleius as merely uneducated people who do not possess the wisdom and knowledge to understand Apuleius' devotion to philosophy. In § 27, Apuleius self-consciously ranks himself among philosophers like Anaxagoras, Leucippus, and Epicurus, who were accused by their contemporaries of having scorned the gods because they devoted their attention to the cosmic nature. Implicit in this comparison is the idea that Apuleius is just as little understood by his accusers as these great men were by theirs, and the eventual goal is to persuade Claudius Maximus not to join these ignorant people in their incorrect estimation of the great philosopher Apuleius. While we have no real reason to doubt the fact that Apuleius' self-defence actually took place, its subsequent publication could be aimed at expanding Apuleius' fame and impact as a serious philosopher on his society.[297]

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296 See esp. Apul. *Apol.* 36. The key study of Apuleius' self-defence remains Vallette (1908). See also Hijmans (1994), who also discusses the *Florida*.

297 For the role of the *Apology* in Apuleius' literary career and self-fashioning, see Harrison (2008).

In § 4 of his *Apology*, Apuleius describes himself as a philosopher who happens to be handsome and a skilled speaker in both Latin and Greek. Apparently, he did not see any point in denying his rhetorical talent. We can deduce, therefore, that Apuleius did not consider there to be any opposition between the practice of philosophy and the display of rhetorical skill. The same coexistence of these two fields of knowledge can be viewed in the *Florida*, a collection of highlights of Apuleius' show performances on various occasions. Throughout the *Florida*, we are confronted with Apuleius' grand verbosity, but his stance consistently remains that of a philosopher. In a recent contribution, Geert Roskam therefore suggests that the Apuleius of the *Florida* may not be all that different from the persona that he adopts throughout the works that are generally regarded as more philosophical.[298] As a result of the succinct form in which the *Florida* present only samples of Apuleius' oratory, we cannot be certain just how important Apuleius' philosophical background was for his rhetorical performances, but what we have at least suggests a consistent philosophical self-representation in his more performative work as well.

Moreover, as in the *Apology*, the Apuleius of the *Florida* argues for eloquence and learning as defining criteria of the proper philosopher. He is even so audacious as to ask for an objective ruling as to who is justified in calling himself a philosopher, confident, it appears, that he would pass the test. In the context of the fragment, he first narrates about Alexander the Great, who only allowed portraits by recognized artists. This is how Apuleius continues:

> I wish that a similar kind of edict concerning philosophy were in force: that no one should attempt its likeness without reason; that few good exponents of proven and encyclopaedic learning should survey the field of philosophy; and that the rude, vulgar, unskilled people who are only philosophers because they wear cloaks should not imitate them, nor should they debase the disciplinary rule invented as much for speaking well as for living well by speaking badly and living in the same way.
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> APUL. *Flor.* 7.9–10; transl. J. HILTON

What also appears from this fragment is that Apuleius, by postulating that learned men should be able to survey the field of philosophy, attributes an important part of philosophical authority to encyclopaedic learnedness. Not unlike many Greek contemporaries of his, he cherishes the possession of a broad knowledge as an important factor to determine who would rank as

298 See Roskam (forthcoming).

a philosopher and who would not. Furthermore, the passage suggests that Apuleius was not averse of the idea that living and speaking go hand in hand, thus establishing a rapport between his own verbal skills and the life of a proper philosopher.

Apuleius is of course most famous for his novel entitled *Metamorphoses*, better known as *The golden ass*, which has received the most scholarly attention of Apuleius' works.[299] The novel is a Latin adaptation of a vulgar Greek tale containing many elements of magic and folklore. It has puzzled many interpreters, especially those who failed to grasp a philosophical meaning in this work, and how a self-proclaimed philosopher of Apuleius' calibre could lower himself to such a vulgar form of literary entertainment.[300] Over the past few decades, and against these previous estimations, scholars have shown the level of sophistication in the composition of the *Metamorphoses* and vividly debate the extent to which Apuleius' philosophical learning does shine through in this resourceful novel. As arguments in favour of such a reading, we can adduce the embedded story of Amor and Psyche, which can quite straightforwardly be read as a Platonizing allegory; a possible reading of the proem of the work as humorously impersonating the uptight anxieties of many concurrent philosophers;[301] or a more encompassing interpretation of the theme of *curiositas* and Lucius' metamorphosis itself as alluding to a Platonic background.[302] Moreover, as we have seen in the case of Lucian, the *spoudaiogeloion* character of the novel may aspire to its own share of (Cynic) philosophical authority,[303] while a sophisticated interpretation of the *Metamorphoses* even suggests a similarity between the novel's viewpoints and Neo-Platonist aesthetics.[304]

On the other hand, some scholars, and especially Stephen Harrison, have argued for at least the possibility (if not the desirability) of reading the *Metamorphoses* as a more resourceful work than the mere philosophical interpretations have suggested. In a recent book,[305] Harrison points to other interesting elements of the novel that are more appropriately read against the backdrop

299 One publication, viz. Kahane—Laird (eds.) (2001), even concerns itself solely with the introduction of the novel. See, for other fairly recent studies, Schlam (1992), Finkelpearl (1998), and Frangoulidis (2008). For diverse analyses of the Isis book of the *Metamorphoses*, see Keulen—Egelhaaf-Gaiser (eds.) (2012).

300 For the Apuleius reception, with discussion, see Harrison (2002).

301 See Trapp (2001).

302 See DeFilippo (1990).

303 Cf. Riess (2008), xii.

304 See Kahane (2007).

305 Harrison (2013).

of Apuleius' wide learning, rather than as an expression of his philosophical doctrines. On the basis of the current debates, it is probably best to conclude that the *Metamorphoses* are obviously written by a philosopher and a man of learning, and both these aspects appear to show themselves in the eventual composition. This philosophical background of the author, however, ought not to overshadow the novel's overall interpretation, but can be seen as one of the many resourceful levels of an extremely complex literary construct.

For another argument in favour of a philosophical reading, the ending of the *Metamorphoses* underscores Apuleius' familiarity with mystical cults such as the cults of Isis and Osiris, about which he received first-hand knowledge through initiations in several mystery cults. These religious aspects, which contributed to Plutarch's philosophical authority as well, may also have added much to Apuleius' reputation as a wise man. Moreover, if we are to believe the fourth/fifth-century Church father Augustine,[306] Apuleius was a frontrunner of religious practices in his own region, functioning as a priest of the province of Africa.

Apart from these more popular works, Apuleius also composed a couple of philosophical treatises that have come down to us. He is quite certainly the author of a work called *On the world*, a free Latin adaptation of Aristotle's treatise on the cosmos, in which Apuleius' eclectic philosophy comes to the surface. In line with his emphasis on encyclopaedic knowledge, this work illustrates that Apuleius' interest in philosophy does not confine itself to merely ethical topics, but has a definite physical component as well. He also wrote a treatise on Socrates' *daimonion*, a popular topic in Imperial philosophy, as a comparison with Maximus of Tyre and Plutarch shows.[307] As in these latter two authors, Apuleius depicts Socrates as a shining example of a proper philosopher who had his own share of contact with the divine order. In joining other Imperial authors in such an estimation of Socrates' *daimonion*, Apuleius obviously inscribes himself in the encompassing philosophical repertoire of his day.

A final work that can quite confidently be attributed to Apuleius is his work *On Plato and his doctrines*. The work offers a schoolish overview of Plato's most important doctrines, in the same vein as the Greek *Handbook of Platonism* of the Middle-Platonist Alcinoüs. Quite interesting is the way in which he appropriates Plato's doctrines, which we know from his dialogues, in order to pro-

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306 Aug. *Ep.* 138.19.

307 Roskam (2010) labels Plutarch's dialogue on the *daimonion* as the most philosophical of the three, while Apuleius is considered on an intermediary level between Plutarch and Maximus.

mote his own ideal paradigm of the eloquent philosopher. This already appears from § 189, where he introduces his exposition of Plato's doctrines with the statement that Plato has formulated reflections that should be applied by people for living, understanding, *and* speaking (*ac loquendi*). While this utterance is not *per se* at odds with Plato's dialogues (in which, after all, some instructions on proper speaking can be found), it nevertheless highlights Apuleius' interest in speaking that is also apparent from his literary and performative career.

More audacious is Apuleius' free interpretation of Plato's *Gorgias*. Instead of portraying a Plato who castigates the use of rhetoric, Apuleius discursively constructs a division between a rhetoric that is the discipline contemplating the good things and a rhetoric that is the 'science' of flattery (§ 231). Implicit in this statement, attributed to the grand authority of Plato, is the idea that Apuleius, an ardent practitioner of rhetoric, could be capable of delivering verbal spectacles without jeopardizing his philosophical authority, as he could claim that his verbose performances fall in the category of the 'good' rhetoric.

In § 233, Apuleius gives an overview of the four practices that are characterized as flattery in the *Gorgias* (cookery, make-up, sophistry, and rhetoric), but he cunningly replaces Plato's 'rhetoric' in the list with the 'profession of the law' (*professionem iuris*), thus transforming the object of Plato's absolute rejection from rhetorical practice in general to its forensic subdivision. In the process, Apuleius manages to save the type of philosophical rhetoric that he himself pursues, and suggests to his audience that Plato would have definitely approved of his paradigm of verbose philosophy.

Scholars like Sandy[308] and Harrison[309] have placed Apuleius firmly in the Greek movement of the Second Sophistic, in as much as Harrison has programmatically labelled him as a 'Latin sophist'. Simon Swain is more sceptical of this approach, and argues that Apuleius is rather a case *sui generis*, which cannot be reduced to the simple label of 'sophist'.[310] Unlike some of his Greek contemporaries, Apuleius' use of the term '*sophista*' is indeed not entangled within the antagonisms of his own day, but merely refers (not per definition negatively) to the first sophistic movement.[311] However, Swain's argument against Apuleius' status as a Latin sophist is, to my mind, only partly persuasive. What we can say is the following: what is left of Apuleius are only Latin works, and on the basis of those, it is hardly plausible that Philostratus would consider

308 See Sandy (1997).
309 See Harrison (2000).
310 See Swain (2004).
311 Swain (2004), 12 n. 26 lists all the relevant instances.

him a sophist, since Philostratus appears to stress the Greekness of the Second Sophistic. However, there were some obvious contacts between Apuleius and the Greek world, already apparent from the content of Apuleius' works, which have resulted in his adoption of several characteristics of this movement in his literary output. When it comes to self-presentation, Swain is right in maintaining that Apuleius shows no sympathy for the contemporary sophistic movement, but it has become clear throughout this chapter that this attitude is quite in line with the self-presentation of many of his Greek contemporaries, who, influenced by the Platonic paradigm of philosophical self-representation, self-consciously tend to value philosophy higher than sophistry. All in all, the resemblances between Apuleius and his Greek intellectual contemporaries are certainly evident, and if he travelled around the Roman Empire and could perform fluently and eloquently in Greek as well, as he asserts in his speeches, his contemporaries were likely to have associated his personality, at least to a reasonable degree, with the Greek sophistic performers of his day. In the context of the Greek intellectuals discussed in these chapters, the aura of the philosopher, which he cultivated, was, in this process of self-advertisement as a public intellectual, no doubt an asset, rather than a liability.

4.11 *Galen of Pergamum (129–ca. 200 CE)*

Even though this intellectual is primarily known in modern times as a physician, Galen's case casts its own interesting light on the conflict between sophists and philosophers, and illustrates the notable flexibility with which the title of philosopher could be claimed by a larger number of people than a modern scholar would imagine from his contemporary experience. Indeed, just like many of the figures we have already discussed, Galen's self-presentation to a large extent revolves around the claim that he is a full-blown philosopher.

Fortunately for students of Galen's biography, the author is himself not thrifty with autobiographical information.[312] Conscious of his own self-authorization as a philosopher-doctor, he narrates how his father, a wealthy and well-educated architect named Aelius Nicon, made him study with the finest representatives of the Platonist, Aristotelian, Stoic, and Epicurean schools. After having had a predictive dream, however, his father decided that Galen should study medicine. Galen obeyed his father's command, but never abandoned his interest in philosophy. From the age of 16 onwards, he took medical training in the Asclepieium of Pergamum, where Aristides and many other

312 For a more extensive overview of Galen's life and works, see Hankinson (2008a). Recent biographies of Galen are Boudon-Millot (2012) and Mattern (2013).

patients came to be cured. After the death of his father, who left him a great financial heritage, Galen decided to take up travelling and learn his profession in many different places abroad. The most important place appears to have been Alexandria, where he was trained in diverse methods of medicine. At the age of 28, back in Pergamum, he became a practising physician, successfully curing the wounds and fractures of gladiators. In 162, at the age of 33, he finally took off to Rome, where he eventually became the official doctor of the Emperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus. He was later also appointed the personal doctor of the young Emperor *in spe* Commodus. This influential position, however, was far from uncontested, and the continuous struggles with rivalling physicians convinced Galen to go back to Pergamum in 168, only to return to Rome a couple of years later, in 170. Eventually, he appears to have gone back to Pergamum for good, but if we are to believe the *Suda*, he was still active as the physician of the Emperor Septimius Severus. The age at which Galen died is highly uncertain.

Galen's literary output is impressive to say the least. His works discuss all areas of ancient medicine, including hygiene, therapeutics, aetiology, anatomy, and pro- and diagnostics. These works are primarily aimed at students of medicine, and are ordered and commented on by Galen himself in his works *On his own books* and *On the order of his books*. Apart from medical treatises, we also find philosophical discussions and some works about language.

Regarding Galen's self-presentation as a physician, it is important to realize that here too there was an overall absence of a generally accredited education on the basis of which medical knowledge and experience could be claimed.[313] Doctors had to advertise their talent and skills in an open medical 'marketplace', where contrasting paradigms competed for patients, who were often from the higher classes of society. In this respect, it is quite remarkable, yet understandable, that Galen aimed to lift his profession, which was traditionally practised by a slave or a free man attached to a patron, to the serious level of the cultivated *pepaideumenos*, thus narrowing the gap between the field of medicine and the elitist world of the Second Sophistic.[314]

Galen's medical opponents consisted of the Empiricists and the Methodists. Himself a Rationalist, Galen firmly claims to put his faith in empirical research, but believes that empirical facts alone do not suffice for an accomplished treatment. Further, as a self-confident *pepaideumenos*, he also attacks the Methodical school, in which the acquisition of a long and full education was rejected

313 Cf. Nutton (1993), 31.

314 See Mattern (2008), 21–27.

and a successful medical training was promised in less than six months. In response to both these positions, Galen values the element of empirical results, but believes that these results should be explained and framed according to dogmatic beliefs extracted from canonical physicians and philosophers. In *On the healing method*, Galen polemically sets out his proper method in opposition with the Methodist Thessalus. In an instructive passage, he implicitly suggests that he has all of the traditional authorities (philosophers!) at his disposal, while Thessalus merely speaks on his own, a dangerous position in a climate where knowledge of the past was generally viewed as a precondition to claim wisdom.

> But if we pass over Plato, Aristotle, and Chrysippus and their followers as being unversed in this matter, we won't find anyone else who is. So if Thessalus will not admit jurors from the other sciences, and the philosophers most skilled in logic will not award him the vote, who will judge the winner? Who will pack the theatre for him? Who will announce the victory? Who will crown him? Clearly he will have to do it himself, as he has in fact done in his own egregious books, acting as judge, crowner, and herald in his own case.
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> GAL. *Meth.Med.* 1.2.13; transl. R.J. HANKINSON

Structurally speaking, the competition over the reputation of being a good physician runs quite parallel with the overall struggle for cultural prestige on the basis of one's devotion to sophistry, rhetoric, and philosophy. However, for a physician, there is a very concrete and unquestionable indication of his claim to master his profession, viz. his ability to actually cure his patients. Given the imperfection of medical knowledge, a physician constantly has to fear adverse circumstances of dying patients, as such events no doubt harm his reputation in the eyes of the public. If Galen's self-recorded biography is indeed an approximation of the historical truth, he seems to have been so talented *and* lucky as to have largely escaped such negative happenings, resulting in an authorial personality that is full of confidence in his method and his eye for detailed diagnosis and, which is even more impressive, prognosis.[315]

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315 Galen's work *On prognosis* contains a wealth of anecdotes that portray the author as a uniquely talented physician among his peers, who fail to notice certain physical manifestations in a patient or misinterpret them. Of course, we should not be blind to the obvious self-advertising flair of the document, which may have seduced Galen to push some less fruitful prognoses of his to the background. Very telling for Galen's self-authorization

Galen's doctrinal paradigm of practising medicine called for a wide knowledge of authoritative texts and ideas from the past, including many philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, and Chrysippus. Philosophy—exploring people's body and soul, searching for the conditions of proper life itself—was thus far from strictly separated from the field of medicine. In his impressive work *On the doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato*, Galen demonstrates (and not seldom discursively establishes) an essential overlap between the doctrines of his two main intellectual forbearers, Hippocrates[316] and Plato, thus installing a firm rapport between medicine and philosophy, and adding to the persuasiveness of his medical expertise in a world that displayed a general reverence for philosophy, but may have looked with more suspicious eyes at the field of medicine.[317] Since philosophy has often defined its task as the *healing* of people's soul, rather than their bodies, this healing aspect facilitated the conceptual continuum between medicine for the body and philosophy for the soul, which forms the backbone of Galen's medical paradigm.[318] All of this does not necessarily mean, however, that Galen's position as a philosopher was entirely uncontested. For philosophers such as Epictetus who tended to disregard the body as an indifferent entity that stands apart from the human essence, the combination of medicine and philosophy may have provoked some obvious protestations, especially if Galen's view on anatomy and other physical explanations diverged from those honoured in the traditional philosophical schools, as is the case more often than not.

While these doctrinal inclinations could already count as an obvious reason why Galen cherishes philosophy within his medical paradigm, his devotion to the field of philosophy goes beyond the mere adoption of traditional philosophical authorities. In his treatise *That the best doctor is also a philosopher*, he asserts that a physician is in need of all three domains of philosophy, viz. ethics, physics, and logic. The ethical aspect of philosophy will assist a doctor in act-

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against the false doctors is the introduction to this work, where he also states that he is a rationalist rather than a magician or a diviner, as some may have accused him of being.

316 Lloyd (1993) reminds us that Galen's Hippocrates is primarily there to legitimize Galen's own claims, and holds no absolute authority as regard Galen's convictions. Note that Galen is the composer of several commentaries on Hippocrates' works. Here, he does not limit himself to explaining Hippocrates' viewpoints, but also corrects his medical predecessor where necessary.

317 Pleket (1995) indicates that the social status of public physicians could be much higher in the Roman Empire than in previous periods, but that the ideal Galenic image of the *iatros pepaideumenos* was by no means generally accepted.

318 Cf. García Ballester (1988) and Hankinson (2006).

ing according to a deontological code. The physical aspect will, as we have seen, prove relevant to frame knowledge of the human body and soul, and to define notions of sickness and health. The logical aspect, finally, offers the necessary methodology with which a physician can arrive at the right diagnosis or prognosis of a patient's disease. Galen's strong belief in rational reasoning according to logical inductions is impressive, and is no doubt one of the main reasons why he was such a successful physician.[319]

As a result of his faithful belief in logic, Galen's doctrinal orientation cannot be traced back to one single philosophical school. Even though his philosophical assumptions and medical theories are heavily influenced by Platonic conceptions, he is no slavish follower of the Middle Platonists of his day. Having tasted from diverse philosophical opinions, he basically decided to follow his own philosophical beliefs, adopting from the schools whatever seemed persuasive to him. This critical attitude is fairly typical of Galen's overall approach, and it testifies to the fact that while Galen held the field of philosophy and its ancient representatives in high esteem, the contemporary philosophers were much less capable of leaving a grand impression on the doctor of Pergamum.[320]

However, while Galen's 'eclecticism'[321] shows a great willingness to learn a higher truth from diverse philosophical positions, he is not an enthusiast of Epicureanism, and is a fierce opponent of Academic and Pyrrhonian Scepticism. For a physician such as Galen, the Sceptical suspension of judgement runs counter to his concrete professional experiences, in which the 'scientific' application of certain methods quite generally corresponded with a certain expected outcome, thus establishing an overwhelming conception of truth.[322] A dogmatic belief in an objective truth thus adds support to Galen's 'scientific' medical practices, and the fact that this objective truth is undermined by the Sceptical or other schools raises in the physician an aversion that resulted in a stringent devotion to logic in order to arrive at proven facts.[323] We have already seen how Galen, in his treatise *On the proper teaching method*, attacked the Academics (and first and foremost Favorinus) for their practice of arguing

319 See Barnes (1993), who states that Galen proudly announces that he has invented a new type of syllogism that can be used to arrive at the truth.

320 Cf. Donini (1992), 3487.

321 Cf. Manuli (1993), 53: "If there is eclecticism, it is certainly not a lazy eclecticism." See also Hankinson (1992).

322 For Galen's epistemology, see Hankinson (2008b).

323 See Tieleman (2008).

both ways on all subjects, defending the transmission of doctrinal knowledge justified by logical reasoning as a firm basis for the education of the young. In the course of this rather short treatise, Galen labels the reasonings of the Sceptics as sophisms, and the Sceptics themselves as sophists. As appears from this treatise as well as many others, sophistry is, in Galen, quite often associated with a type of reasoning that does not conform to his own logical conceptions, and can thus also be a term of abuse for rivalling philosophical or common opinions. In a telling passage of his work *On the doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato* (2.2.4–2.4.1), Galen instructs his reader how the application of logic on certain reasonings can serve as a sort of shield against the dynamics of persuasion by rhetorical and sophistic arguments. In this case, his adversaries are the Stoics, who come to be seen as sophists because of their use of arguments that do not pass the test of Galen's strict logic.[324]

Galen's fetish for provable facts and methodical reasoning may also explain why he can label medical adversaries as sophists as well. In an impressively documented article on the interrelation between Galen and the Second Sophistic, Heinrich Von Staden cites numerous passages in which sophists and sophistic arguments are rebuked by the educated physician.[325] However, as Von Staden goes on to argue,[326] the hasty conclusion that Galen wholeheartedly turned his back on the Second Sophistic movement fails to grasp the performative dimension of his medical demonstrations. Indeed, Galen did not shy away from stepping into the public domain, performing vivisections on animals and thus demonstrating the 'irrefutable' character of his physical claims. Generally, such a demonstration of a physical 'fact' was introduced by a verbal speech, not unlike the *prolaliai* before an actual sophistic performance. In the light of this structural resemblance between Galen's medical and the sophists' verbal performances, it is not hard to imagine how Galen must have considered the show performers of his day verbose babblers who were unable to offer indisputable proofs for their grand claims, just as a rivalling physician who had an opposite medical theory but failed to prove it during a vivisection was considered to be far inferior to the doctor of Pergamum.

That philosophy had a concrete impact on Galen's emotional stance toward the material world in which he lived appears very clearly from the recently

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324 Other passages in which logic is put forward as an antidote to sophistic reasoning include Gal. *Praen.* 1.15 (Nutton); *Thras.* K.5.818; *Anim.pass.* K.5.72–73; and the work *Soph.*, where linguistic sophisms are refuted.

325 See Von Staden (1997), 34–36, nn. 3–12. See also the earlier work by Kollesch (1981).

326 See, again, Von Staden (1997). See also, on vivisection and the show culture in which Galen operated, Debru (1995); Mattern (2008), 69–97; and Gleason (2009).

discovered letter *On the avoidance of grief*, in which he explains how he manages to maintain mental composure in the face of the recent loss of his Roman library as a result of a great fire that also destroyed many other of his belongings. As if to add fuel to the reader's admiration for his tolerance, Galen at length enumerates a great number of works that were irretrievably lost in the fire, all the while emphasizing that this did not affect his mental disposition. It appears that the Stoic depreciation of earthly belongings as one of the main paths toward mental carelessness has thoroughly informed the philosophical response of Galen, who asserts that he was not even moved for a short while by these external circumstances (11: *mête brachu kinêtheis*). Even while, in the end, he seems to recognize his own imperfection when it comes to indifference (78b: *ou mên hyperanô pasôn* [*perstaseôn*] *eimi*), he thoroughly cultivates the impression that he is far better qualified than his unphilosophical contemporaries to deal with the hardships of life.

Apart from highlighting this Stoic indifference, the letter also provides Galen's account on the inheritability of an ethical nature, as he asserts that his grandfather and father, even if they were not philosophers (cf. 58: *touto chôris tôn ek philosophias logôn*), were still virtuous men, and seem to have passed on their exemplary disposition to the next generation. Such a laudatory remark can obviously also be turned into some proper self-advertisement, as the virtuous nature of his ancestors becomes at once a pledge of the intrinsically good mentality of Galen himself. Moreover, implicit in his emphasis on his father's inexperience in philosophy is the suggestion that Galen himself is the first representative of his family who has managed to enrich his essentially virtuous disposition with various sorts of philosophical viewpoints and doctrines. This may not make him a better person *per se* than his father and grandfather, but it highlights his own self-definition as a learned individual who is sufficiently well versed in philosophy to give a doctrinal account on the motivations behind his ethical conduct.

On the level of philosophical self-fashioning, *On the avoidance of grief* also provides Galen with the opportunity to give an overview of his wide learning.[327] The report of the works lost in the fire simultaneously makes the reader aware of the broad collection of works on which Galen could rely. As for the philosophers, a classical scholar who does not possess Galen's tranquillity of mind cannot but feel slightly envious of his direct access—before the fire, that is—to grand philosophers such as Theophrastus and Chrysippus, to name but two (15). In a work that so explicitly advocates Galen's philosophical approach to the

327 See Nutton (2009).

haphazard fate of everyday life, it is tempting to see in his report of the magnitude of his library a consciously intended advertisement of his philosophical and medical polymathy.

Galen's broad education and interests show themselves elsewhere as well, and not only pertaining to medical or philosophical matters, but also to linguistic particularities. He even wrote a work in five books on word use in the comedy writer Aristophanes.[328] Works of this type indicate that Galen was no dull *Fachidiot*, but had his own share in the craze for broad *polymatheia* that thoroughly characterizes his era.[329] Galen's authority as a connoisseur of medicine is also recognized in Athenaeus' *Dinner of the sophists*, where he shares his knowledge with the other table guests (and, of course, with the reader of the work), and where, in the introduction of the characters, he is described as a physician and a philosopher. It thus appears that, at least in the eyes of the intellectuals of the Roman Empire, Galen did manage to lay claim to some philosophical authority alongside his medical practices. Even more tellingly, if we are to believe Galen's own narration, after he managed to cure the Emperor Marcus Aurelius on the basis of an assessment of his pulse, Marcus referred to Galen as 'first among physicians and unique among philosophers'.[330] It is only in his subsequent reception that Galen's merits as a physician tended to overshadow his status as a philosopher, and this may have, for a long time, disguised the remarkable self-evidence with which Imperial philosophy could be embodied by one of the most brilliant physicians in the history of medicine.

4.12 *Sextus Empiricus (ca. 160–ca. 210 CE)*

Of all the figures in this overview, Sextus Empiricus is the one least known to us.[331] However, in opposition to Maximus of Tyre, we at least know something, viz. that he was an ardent adherent of Pyrrhonian Scepticism and an Empiricist physician who apparently also wrote medical treatises that are no longer extant.[332] It may seem odd that a stringent Sceptic such as Sextus could actually believe himself to be qualified to participate in the medical profession in light of his continuous refusal to pass judgements (Galen's medical paradigm seems more straightforward here). In reality, however, there appears to have

328 For this commentary and other aspects of Galen's commentaries, see Flemming (2008).

329 For diverse aspects of knowledge in Galen, see the collection of essays in Gill—Whitmarsh—Wilkins (eds.) (2009).

330 Gal. *Praen.* 11.1–8 (Nutton).

331 See the discussions in House (1980); Floridi (2002), 3–7; and Pellegrin (2010).

332 See D.L. 9.116; and, for the allusion to his own medical works, S.E. *M* 7.202.

been a fair number of Empiricist physicians,[333] and Sextus' Pyrrhonian theory itself, arguing that a Sceptic can take part in ordinary life without engaging in any firm conclusions about it, leaves open a conceptual door for a form of medical treatment on the basis of experience, memory, and perceptions, as long as there is no underlying rational theory backing up the medical treatments.[334]

Sextus is the author of three works that have come down to us in the form of two. The first of these books is called the *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* (hereafter *PH*) and discusses the general orientation points according to which one can adopt the life of a Pyrrhonian Sceptic. The second is called *Against the professors* (hereafter *M*) and consists of refutations of the truth claims of various forms of institutionalized education, whether philosophical or other. It is quite probable that the chronological order of the books of *Against the professors* has been disrupted, and that books 7 to 11 were actually written earlier than books 1 to 6.[335] Books 7 to 11 are thus regarded as a separate work, often entitled *Against the dogmatists*, which consists of two books *Against the logicians*, two books *Against the physicians*, and one book *Against the ethicists*. Books 1 to 6 are then called *Against the professors* and consist of attacks against the grammarians (1), the rhetoricians (2), the geometricians (3), the arithmeticians (4), the astrologists (5), and the musicians (6).

Sextus Empiricus is our most important source for Imperial Pyrrhonian Scepticism. Pyrrhonian Scepticism, founded by Aenesidemus in the first century BCE, presents itself as a devoted heir of the fourth/third-century philosopher Pyrrho[336] and, unlike Academic Scepticism, discursively places itself outside the Platonic tradition. Earlier we encountered the Academic Scepticism of Favorinus and Plutarch. While Sextus' Pyrrhonian Scepticism displays some obvious overlaps with its Academic counterpart, Sextus himself quite firmly

333 From D.L. 9.115–116, we know at least of three apart from Sextus: Menodotus, one of Galen's *adversaires préférés*, Theodas, and Sextus' own student Saturninus.

334 For more detailed discussions, which also discuss Sextus' criticism on Empiricist medicine in *PH* 236–241 and Sextus' innovative position *vis-à-vis* the traditional Empiricist school, see Bailey (2002), 86–99; and Allen (2010). Perin (2010), 86–113 argues that the Sceptical refutation of the *apraxia* argument (the argument that a Sceptic who does not know what is right nevertheless has to make practical decisions in order to stay alive) revolves around the radical conceptual difference between appearance (which a Sceptic will use to act) and belief (against which a Sceptic will oppose himself).

335 This is also confirmed by the detailed philological analysis by Janácek (1948).

336 See Bett (2000). On p. 190, Bett argues that it is possible that Arcesilaus has, in his turn, built on Pyrrho's thoughts.

and polemically rejects the Academic paradigm.[337] While the third-century philosopher Arcesilaus, the founder of the so-called Middle Academy, is regarded as a proper Sceptic, Sextus rebukes the subsequent Academic tradition for having a 'negative dogmatism', in that they postulate the truth of the assertion that nothing is certain, something which a real Sceptic would doubt in itself.[338] This tendentious interpretation does in all likelihood not correspond to the self-conception of Academics such as Carneades, but the fact remains that Sextus denies them a place among the Sceptics and sees them merely as embodying a twisted form of dogmatism.

How, then, does the Pyrrhonian Sceptic respond to the *apraxia* argument, which provocatively asks how a Sceptic can keep on living if he does not commit himself to a certain belief about, for example, food, sleep, or social needs? Sextus rejects Carneades' argument that the probable can serve as a guideline for social conduct, and advocates a life that is simply directed towards customs, laws, and nature, without any belief in its probability. In fact, it is in the radical opposition between appearances (which the Sceptic can use for his behaviour) and beliefs (against which the Sceptic will oppose himself) that Sextus finds the conceptual foundation for leading an ordinary life without jeopardizing his Sceptical attitude.[339]

By detaching oneself from any dogmatic belief and engaging in a constant state of suspension of judgement (*epochê*), so Sextus argues, one can obtain a life free from sorrows (*ataraxia*).[340] In order to reach this state, the Pyrrhonian tradition has designed a set of tropes (ten according to Aenesidemus, five according to some further unknown Agrippa) that always enable one to question the absolute and stable character of the truth claims of a dogmatic philosopher.[341]

If one does not grasp the concrete goal of Sextus' Sceptical project, it is easy to misinterpret some isolated passages as seemingly in favour of the world of rhetoric. Much of this misinterpretation may arise from the discursive way

337 In this respect, his conception of the relation between Academism and Pyrrhonism is entirely different from the mild ideas of Favorinus, who believed that Sceptical thought was more or less unified. See Lévy (2010), 96–98. On the commonalities and the differences between the Academy and the Pyrrhonians, see respectively Striker (1981) and (2010). For a discussion of Scepticism in general, see also Hankinson (1995), and Thorsrud (2009).

338 For the representation of the Academy in the work of Sextus, see Ioppolo (2009).

339 See Perin (2010), 86–113.

340 For a philological analysis of Sextus' thoughts, see Janácek (1972). For a more philosophical approach, see, e.g., Vogt (1998) and Brennan (1999).

341 For an overview of the tropes, see, e.g., Woodruff (2010), with relevant bibliography.

in which Sextus undermines the affirmations of the dogmatic philosophies. In his rejection of dogmatic knowledge and his continuous suspension of judgement, Sextus seemingly (but only seemingly!) proves himself an unlikely ally of the world of rhetoric and sophistry. In *PH* 2.229–259, Sextus argues that it is impossible and useless to definitively refute sophisms, as this would imply that there are logical criteria according to which such a refutation could be validated. Furthermore, in his attack against the logicians, Sextus argues that, from a Sceptical point of view, the pursuit of dogmatic philosophy follows the same idle path as rhetoric.

> [T]hose who are reputed to be intelligent are frequently advocates not of truth but of falsehood. Thus we call those orators who ably support what is false, and raise it to equal the true in credibility, competent and brainy, and those who are of this class we call, on the contrary, slow of wit and intelligent. Possibly, then, in philosophy also the most sharpwitted of the seekers after truth seem to be convincing (*πιθανοί*), even if they advocate what is false, owing to their natural ability, whereas those lacking this ability are unconvincing, even when they contend for what is true.
>
> S.E. *M* 7.325–326; transl.: R.G. BURY

For a Sceptic, dogmatic philosophy does not enjoy an advantage in its intellectual struggle with sophists or rhetoricians. The point is that sophistry and rhetoric do not offer any worse a road to knowledge and wisdom than dogmatic philosophy, but they do not offer a better one, either.[342] The problem with the pursuit of grammar and rhetoric is, according to Sextus, that it has developed into specialized disciplines that claim the authority to say something true about their respective object.[343] Therefore, while rhetoric and sophistry are condemned not more fiercely than dogmatist philosophies, the basic assumption that rhetorical skill can be developed into an art on the basis of theoretical knowledge is thoroughly at odds with Sextus' Sceptical attitude.[344]

342 Notice that D.L. 9.69 mentions that Pyrrho hated the sophists of his day.

343 In the programmatic opening of *M*, Sextus points out that the assault on the arts arises from an experience with the Pyrrhonians quite similar to that with the dogmatist philosophies. For an analysis and interpretation, see Spinelli (2010).

344 It thus becomes clear that Sextus' attitude towards rhetoric is quite peculiar. Just as I would doubt whether Aristides' attitude towards rhetoric in his orations *To Plato* is typical of the entire field of rhetoric, so I would argue against bluntly identifying Sextus' approach with philosophy more broadly, as is done in Karadimas (1996). By juxtaposing these two

In other words, in as much as rhetorical skill falls under the category of customs that guide everyday life, the Pyrrhonist Sceptic may follow its directions rather than the opposite viewpoints of dogmatic philosophies, but *without feeling any commitment to its truth*. After all:

> Accordingly, the Sceptic, seeing so great a diversity of usages, suspends judgement as to the natural existence of anything good or bad or (in general) fit or unfit to be done, therein abstaining from the rashness of dogmatists; and he follows undogmatically the ordinary rules of life, and because of this he remains impassive in respect of matters of opinions, while in conditions that are necessitated his emotions are moderate.
>
> S.E. *PH* 3.235; transl.: R.G. BURY

How this lack of commitment further ought to be understood becomes apparent from Sextus' attack against grammarians and rhetoricians in the first two books of *Against the professors*. These books, just like the rest of the work, contain an amalgam of different strategies to undermine the truth claims of the arts of grammar and rhetoric.[345] Sometimes, the impossibility of an art of grammar and rhetoric is maintained, while on other occasions its uselessness is demonstrated.[346]

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texts, which have not been written in direct response to one another, Karadimas finds some useful results, but the fact that both writers are quite *sui generis* makes it hard to extrapolate these findings. In fact, one can construct many imaginary discussions between philosophy and rhetoric in the culture of Imperial Greece and Rome, and Karadimas' discussion is only one of the many possible alternatives.

345 Cf. Bailey (2002), 108: "It seems (…) that one of the primary functions of *Against the Professors* is to provide an account of how the Pyrrhonian sceptic interprets those arts that do guide him in the course of his daily life." See also Barnes (1988).

346 Bett (2006) argues for an apparent case of intellectual 'schizophrenia' in this work, as Sextus sometimes seems to argue from a dogmatic standpoint that some arts are nonexistent and other useless. Bett explains this schizophrenia by postulating that Sextus is here also drawing on earlier modes of thought in Pyrrhonism. In the same volume, Pellegrin (2006) takes up the defence of the essential unity of Sextus' Sceptical thought. In another response to Bett's thesis, Delattre (2006) identifies some lines of argument that seem to be borrowed from the Epicureans, who also argued for the uselessness of the institutionalized forms of education. On the last point, see also Pellegrin (2010), 139: "The Pyrrhoneans and certain dogmatists, who had irreconcilable positions about philosophy, find common ground concerning the arts, namely in undermining one of their fundamental elements—in this case utility."

Quite indicative of Sextus' response to these arts is his treatment of '*hellenismos*' (the quality of style consisting in speaking or writing correct Greek). On the one hand, one should definitely not commit apparent errors against correct diction.

> That one must preserve with some care purity of speech is at once plain; for the man who is constantly using barbarisms and solecisms is jeered at as one of no culture, whereas he who speaks good Greek is capable of presenting his ideas both clearly and exactly.
>
> S.E. *M* 1.176; transl.: R.G. BURY

On the other hand, *hellenismos* is only useful for as far as it is adopted through observation in others, and not in the form of theory that is taught by a grammarian. Eventually, it is maintained that common usage will not need an art (*M* 1.182), and there is no natural criterion to separate good from bad Greek anyway (*M* 1.187).

The same remarkable position and the same hybrid argumentation occur in Sextus' treatment of rhetoric. In *M* 2.10, Sextus deconstructs the Stoic definition that rhetoric is a system of co-exercised apprehensions (*katalêpseis*) directed to an end useful for life by pointing out that rhetoric is *not* a system of apprehensions—for the very existence of apprehensions is doubted by the Sceptic. Therefore, rhetoric cannot be an art. Furthermore, rhetoric is castigated for not having a firm and stable goal (*M* 2.14–16), and is useless for its user in that it does not contribute to one's happiness (obviously understood as Sceptical *ataraxia*) (*M* 2.30). On the objection that rhetoric can be used in both a base and an elevated way, Sextus replies that this shows the essential neutral character of rhetoric, and if it is not good in itself, it is not worth practising (*M* 2.43–45).

From the arguments above, it appears quite clearly that Sextus thinks of his own Sceptical argumentation techniques as non-rhetorical. In order to justify this claim, he points out that speech is not confined to the study of rhetoric, but extends to all domains that make use of words (*M* 2.51). In arguing that people such as doctors do not make use of rhetoric, but merely of common usage of words, Sextus not only rejects the confident assertions of the sophists in Plato's *Gorgias*, who claim that they have a say about every public domain as a result of their mastery of language; he also implicitly leaves open the possibility of speaking without practising rhetoric, and it is precisely this type of common language use stripped from rhetorical flavour that Sextus advocates to the Sceptic, which is why he feels the need to discredit the use of rhetoric as a refined art. Finally, even though one may have the impression that Sextus' discursive

techniques quite closely resemble the practice of *in utramque partem disserere*, and even though this is an accepted practice in Academic Scepticism, in *M* 2.96, Sextus vehemently opposes himself to arguing both ways, stating that it merely causes confusion in the decision-making.

It thus seems that Sextus strategically narrows the notion of rhetoric down to the formal study with the *rhêtôr*, and then denies any overlap between his own arsenal of Sceptical techniques and the pursuit of rhetoric. In this respect, his treatment of rhetoric and the sophistic world has quite a rigid character, in that it only allows for the common-sense basis and castigates anything that goes beyond the ordinary customs. The discursivity of his own argumentative methods is in the process disguised as a natural and traditional response to the dogmatic tendencies around him, whether philosophical or more generally educational.

Throughout the reception of his legacy, Sextus has been widely regarded as a philosopher, and his influence on the field of Sceptical philosophy can hardly be exaggerated.[347] Regarding the world of rhetoric and sophistry, his philosophical paradigm is thoroughly at odds with other famous Sceptics such as Favorinus, who did believe in an embellished form of speech delivery as a proper response to everyday life. In his castigation of verbal sophistication, however, Sextus stood not alone. Apart from other Sceptical authors, the Epicureans also—dogmatically!—opposed themselves to the liberal arts, and the Cynics also advocated a simple life without the cultivation of refined speech. Moreover, when he addresses rhetoric's incapability to satisfy its user and the possibility of there being a simple language use that is free from technical rhetorical flavour, Sextus' tone even comes quite close to the riper Stoic Marcus Aurelius in his *Meditations*, even though both Sextus and Marcus would probably be quick to assert that this slight overlap cannot disguise the fundamental differences between their respective philosophies.

4.13 *Sophistry, Philosophy, and Rhetoric in the Roman Empire*

While the selection of these twelve intellectuals cannot cover all the individual complexities that come to the surface in the fields of Imperial philosophy, rhetoric, and sophistry,[348] it already suffices to highlight the unstable nature of the conflict between these fields in the Imperial era. Looking at these authors

347 See, e.g., Annas—Barnes (1985).

348 Since the notion of Christian religion is entirely absent from the worldview of Maximus of Tyre's orations, I have focused primarily on pagan philosophers, rhetoricians, and sophists in my overview. See however the recent study of Eshleman (2012), who discusses the interrelation between philosophy and Christianity in this period.

as partaking in roughly the same socio-cultural environment, moreover, allows us to extract some general tendencies that characterize the overall 'poetics' of this Imperial culture, and put the dichotomy between sophists and philosophers in perspective. We can thus lay a foundation for a bottom-up and historically accurate reconstruction of the dynamic nature in which the opposition between rhetoric, sophistry, and philosophy, as well as the internal disagreements between various 'philosophical' definitions of philosophy, come to the surface.

Firstly, we can find a tendency to present one's own practice as philosophical in order to lend it intellectual credibility. If we take into account the aforementioned hypothesis about the two discursive systems in the Roman Empire, this tendency can be interpreted as a result of the different ways in which the sophistic and the philosophical system regard each other. For someone partaking in the sophistic system (Philostratus and our epigraphical sources being the most obvious representatives), it is possible and even desirable to reconcile sophistic with philosophical aspirations, for the field of *paideia*, which a sophist needs to master, also includes the philosophical classics. However, once such intellectuals aim to present themselves as philosophers, they can no longer claim to be sophists any more, for the repertoire of the philosophical system (thoroughly determined by Plato's castigation of the fifth-century sophists) appears to demand a full condemnation of sophistic practices. On top of that, the field of logic, which is developed in the Aristotelian and the Stoic tradition and applied in other Imperial dogmatic philosophies as well, defines a sophism (as committed by sophists) as an argument that only *seemingly* follows of necessity from the premise. From this perspective, we have observed how authors who firmly believe in the power of logic—of which Galen is probably the best example[349]—are prepared to label the philosophical ideas they do not logically support as sophistic. To summarize, while an intellectual could, from the sophistic side, present himself as an astute speaker and yet also an eloquent philosopher, he cannot, from a philosophical perspective, explicitly claim to combine his philosophical pursuits with sophistic ambitions. As a result, many of the literary texts of this age have a fairly paradoxical appearance, as they combine sophistic display with philosophical discourse that condemns sophistic display.[350] This reconstruction of the discursive power structures between these two systems enables us to explain Graham Stanton's observation that

349 See also Plut. *Comm.not.* 1059a, where the Stoics are reported to have labelled the Academics as sophists and charlatans.

350 See Lauwers (2013), 358.

more Imperial intellectuals, such as Apuleius, Favorinus, Dio, and even Aristides, present themselves as anti-sophists than modern scholarship has intuitively pigeonholed them.

Secondly, an overview of this sort clearly demonstrates the variety of philosophical paradigms that were embraced by Imperial intellectuals. These different conceptions of philosophy give rise to a wide array of doctrines and practices that are not seldom at odds with those of other self-proclaimed philosophers, and this not solely on the level of theoretical doctrine (such as the opposition between virtue and pleasure), but also on the level of concrete practice and instruction. While some would take pride in their Cynic rejection of existing power structures, others (primarily Platonists, but also other schools) would claim that a philosopher should have impact on the ruler of a society. While some (primarily the Stoics) would condemn the rhetorical practice of arguing both ways in a debate because it opposes itself to the belief in one single dogmatic truth, others (the Academics) would advertise this precisely *because* it leads to a constant suspension of judgement that will eventually result in a carefree existence. While some (the Cynics, the Epicureans, and the Pyrrhonians) would reject the pursuit of cultured education because it leads away from the simple and happy philosophical life, others (primarily the Aristotelians) would argue that knowledge about the world and human life in all its aspects, along with speculation about its causes, is a prime stepping-stone toward philosophical wisdom. The examples of these conflicting ideas within the philosophical field are numerous, and they provoke further complications for the relationships *within* the field of philosophy and *between* the field of philosophy and those of rhetoric and sophistry.

The third tendency that becomes apparent from this overview of Imperial intellectuals is the rapport that is established between words and deeds. As has been argued in influential overviews of ancient philosophy such as that of Pierre Hadot,[351] ancient philosophy was not regarded as just a cerebral undertaking, but should have an actual impact on people's behaviour in life. This does not mean, however, that every self-proclaimed philosopher lived up to his words—in fact, many ancient authors complain about others who fail to do so![352] Where the demand of consistency between words and deeds *is* heavily felt, though, is quite paradoxically on the level of discourse. Polemical assaults do not restrict themselves to a philosopher's doctrines and arguments, but also

351 See Hadot (1995).

352 Not even the traditional philosophers are spared from the attacks of these Imperial authors. For Plutarch's accusation in *Lat.viv.* that Epicurus is not consistent, see Roskam (2007), 90–99.

extend to his life and deeds, so we must not be surprised that most of the intellectuals in our overview find themselves delivering apologetic discourses justifying their behaviour in one way or another. The philosophical demand to display consistency between words and deeds thus proves to be quite powerful, but the open definition of philosophy shaped a discursive playground in which each intellectual could attempt to demonstrate the suitability of his deeds according to the standards that he himself represents as philosophical. The extent to which such an appropriation managed to convince a contemporary (or later) audience to rank a certain individual among the philosophers or the sophists obviously depended on the rhetorical power with which the speaker in question sold his own philosophical paradigm as the high-road to knowledge, truth, and virtuous conduct.

A fourth tendency among these authors, closely connected to the previous one, is their shared urge to legitimize their proper claims and paradigms with discursive representations of traditional viewpoints and canonical authorities. Given the importance of knowledge of the classical Greek tradition, and this both in the fields of sophistry and of philosophy, many authors seek authoritative examples, doctrines, and figures from the past in order to back up their claims and place them in a long-standing tradition. This does not mean that authors could not develop some innovative paradigms, but if they do, they tend to frame their 'adventurous' new practices as thoroughly grounded in the tradition. In their selections and interpretations of the traditional authorities, they display creative forms of appropriation designed to persuade their listeners or readers that the rhetorical and/or philosophical paradigm for which they stand is firmly anchored in conventional traditional models.

This, then, forms the field in which Maximus of Tyre operated and developed his philosophical self-presentation. As a rather extreme example of the tendencies discussed above, he challenges the scholarly willingness to put our own expectations concerning proper philosophy aside and to focus on the interactions between Maximus and his social world instead. In order to increase our appreciation of this philosophical orator, we will have to contextualize his speeches, reconstruct an audience that may have come to listen to the Tyrian, show his interplay with his culture's norms and expectations, analyse his cunning representation and appropriation of traditional authorities, and witness the emergence of a shrewd intellectual in search of a prestigious place in his contemporary society. All of these undertakings will be the subject of the second chapter of this book.

CHAPTER 2

The *dialexeis* of Maximus of Tyre

After having reflected on the dynamic definition of the fields of sophistry, rhetoric, and philosophy, the question remains as to how Maximus of Tyre positions himself and the tradition in this debate. Yet before we can investigate how he represents himself and the tradition in his work, we have to give ourselves an account of the peculiar form of his philosophical orations, so that we can develop a consistent interpretation on the basis of plausible assumptions about the historical dialogue between the author and his audience. Unfortunately, given the lack of historical information about Maximus, we have to rely exclusively on the text for a reconstruction of the historical communication implicit in the written recordings of the *dialexeis* that have come down to us. Therefore, we need to start this chapter with an introduction of the themes, the genre, the model audience, and the speaker's communicational stance, if only because our assumptions concerning these interpretative issues are of paramount importance for our overall interpretation of the author's self-legitimating discourse. Only after this interpretative hurdle is cleared, can we address the remarkably consistent representation of the fields of philosophy, rhetoric, and sophistry; *remarkably* consistent, since previous negative judgements have tended to portray the Tyrian as a rather associative and weak composer of speeches. This study will redeem Maximus' rhetorical and discursive consistency, which strategically inscribes itself in the dynamic intellectual struggles of its era, and which thus forms a notable enrichment of our understanding of Imperial philosophy in its historical context.

1 Reading Maximus' *dialexeis*

1.1 *Themes and Genre*

The manuscript tradition has preserved 41 of Maximus' speeches, but it is uncertain whether this is the Tyrian's entire literary output. The fact that the final oration is not complete may raise our suspicion that the text must have broken off at this point, but since some other orations are likely to be incomplete as well, we do not know for sure. The orations are overall rather short, especially in comparison with the sometimes very extensive speeches of Aelius Aristides or Dio Chrysostom. Given their brevity, there is a relatively large difference between the longest oration (*Or.* 11) and the shortest oration (*Or.* 28),

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the former being more than three times the size of the latter. However, between the other *dialexeis* the difference is often much smaller, with a large number being close to the average size. Roughly speaking, the actual performance of one average speech could not have taken much longer than twenty minutes.

It is not clear whether the *dialexeis* have been edited by Maximus himself or whether someone in the audience quickly recorded the speeches in order to let them circulate. The titles of the speeches do not always neatly correspond to the content of the oration, but this can be explained in two possible ways: the titles are either added by someone other than the speaker (a contemporary member of the audience or a later copyist), or they were the original themes which Maximus proposed to treat, but from which he quite liberally decided to deviate *en cours de route*. Of course, one may ask oneself whether Maximus, if he actually did do the editing work himself, would not have adapted these titles to the actual content. On top of that, there is a small oddity in one manuscript title that may point to the fact that the titles are given by someone else. Maximus never refers to a philosophical school such as the Stoa, the Peripatos, or the Academy with reference to contemporary debates. One exception to this tendency can be found in the title of the thirty-sixth oration Εἰ προηγούμενος ὁ τοῦ κυνικοῦ βίος (*Whether the life of the Cynic is preferable*). The mentioning of the Cynic movement in the title has no parallel in Maximus' oeuvre, not even in the thirty-sixth oration itself. Therefore, it seems sensible to assume that this title—and, by extension, all titles—were an addition by someone else.[1]

Over the last decades, scholars appear to have reached a consensus concerning the unity of Maximus' corpus. In his 1910 edition of the *dialexeis*, Hobein already argued in favour of such a view, modifying the order of the manuscripts to a more plausible sequence. Mutschmann, however, contested Hobein's modification, arguing against the cogency of such a drastic procedure from the editor's part. Mutschmann thus maintains, in line with the manuscript tradition, that Maximus' texts should be divided into two separate corpuses, viz. his orations that he held during his first-time visit to Rome and his *philosophoumena*.[2] In 1982, however, Koniaris came up with a very convincing reconstruction of the manuscript tradition and its errors, the results of which have ever since refuted Mutschmann's position and restored confidence in Hobein's reconstruction. Not only does Koniaris offer thematic grounds for Hobein's order (pointing to the obvious suitability of the seventh oration in the traditional order for the purpose of introducing Maximus' lecturing practice to first-time visitors), he

1 Cf. Trapp (1997a), lviii; *pace* Koniaris (1982), 102–110.

2 Cf. Mutschmann (1917).

also neatly and plausibly explains how the manuscript tradition must have disrupted the original order and thus created an artificial division between the *dialexeis* and the *philosophoumena*, a distinction that is not tenable in light of the overall discursive unity of Maximus' oeuvre.

What, then, are the themes that Maximus treats in his *dialexeis*? For a reader who does not have access to a text edition or a translation of the Tyrian, we here give a very basic summary of the main theme of each oration, on the basis of the modern reconstruction of the original order.

1. Philosophical logos in life
2. Images of the gods
3. Socrates not defending himself
4. Poetry and philosophy
5. Prayer
6. Knowledge
7. Health
8. Socrates' *daimonion* (1)
9. Socrates' *diamonion* (2)
10. Knowledge as memory
11. God according to Plato
12. Revenge
13. Divination
14. Friendship and flattery
15. Pro active life
16. Pro contemplative life
17. Homer in Plato's republic
18. Socrates' love (1)
19. Socrates' love (2)
20. Socrates' love (3)
21. Socrates' love (4)
22. Entertainment
23. Pro soldier's life
24. Pro farmer's life
25. Consistency words and deeds
26. Homer as philosopher
27. Is virtue an art?
28. Health
29. Virtue as philosophical goal (1)
30. Virtue as philosophical goal (2)
31. Virtue as philosophical goal (3)
32. Pleasure as philosophical goal
33. Virtue as philosophical goal (4)
34. Adverse circumstance
35. Friendship
36. Cynical life
37. Liberal arts
38. Divine dispensation
39. Pro unity of Good
40. Against unity of Good
41. Evil and divine providence

Overall, we encounter a fairly large number of diverse topics, most of which are also known to us from other philosophical sources. Some of these orations cling together, either complementing or refuting each other. The main focus is on ethics, but there are a decent number of physical treatises as well. Logic is entirely absent from this list. All of these rudimentary observations will be discussed in more detail in the remainder of this chapter.

When we want to talk about the genre to which the *dialexeis* could belong, a decent starting point is to compare it to another 'genre' that has often been mentioned in philosophical discourse, viz. the *diatribe*. The most important

conclusion concerning the so-called 'genre' of the cynico-stoic *diatribe* is that it is a *modern* construct that does not necessarily reflect the actual perception of the ancient authors and philosophers.[3] Research reflecting on the *diatribe* is often very speculative, as there are many uncertainties concerning its actual form and functioning, which is due to our scarce documentation about the *diatribe*'s foundations in the Hellenistic period. Furthermore, there is no real denotation among scholars of what a *diatribe* actually means, which hinders an adequate assessment of its importance for the history of philosophy.

Therefore, when we try to connect Maximus to the tradition of the *diatribe*,[4] we are basing our findings on modern constructs and not on the actual historical situation in the Roman Empire. Indeed, Maximus was in all likelihood not deaf to some features of what we nowadays call *diatribes*,[5] but overemphasizing the role of the 'genre'[6] of the *diatribe* as a source for the *dialexeis* is neither very conclusive nor very helpful. In any case, there are no clues in Maximus' text that he saw his own practice in line with the genre of the *diatribe*.

3 See Schenkeveld (1997), 230–247, who includes Maximus in his discussion; see also Moles (2003), 463.

4 See, e.g., Dürr (1899), 1sqq.

5 For the definition of the *diatribe*, see Trapp (1997b), 1974, n. 100. Add to that the uncomfortably broad definition of Oltramare (1926), 9: "L'histoire de la diatribe, dirons-nous, est celle de la littérature moralisante populaire." See also more recently (on the ambiguous status of the '*diatribe*' of Musonius Rufus), Van Geytenbeek (1963), 14, who does not call into doubt the direct influence of the cynico-stoic *diatribe*, but remarks that the later *diatribe* is less invective than its original forbearer.

6 The concept of genre presupposes that the writers who want to stand in a generic tradition take a certain set of 'rules' into account which are perceived as the typical conventions of that specific genre. The public, for its part, may use the concept of genre to have certain expectations and interpretational hints as to how the text needs to be read (for the politics of genre, with a concrete application to the ancient novel, see Goldhill (2008a)). Neither for Maximus nor for his public, the 'genre' of the ancient *diatribe* seems to fulfil such a function, for Maximus makes no effort to ground his own practice in a genre labelled as *diatribe*, and therefore does not seem to want to deploy the dynamics of genre *vis-à-vis* his audience. This is not to say, however, that the public had no expectations at all when they came to listen to Maximus. If we accept that the term *dialexis* was conventionally used to describe Maximus' practice, the public could have known to a certain extent what and how the speaker in front of them was going to deliver. And even if the latter supposition is not true, we may already point out that, given the performative situation of the speeches, Maximus' outward appearance and the social setting already indicated to the audience what they were going to get. For this reason, it seems better to assume Maximus' adherence to a certain tradition of popular lecturing on morality rather than to a certain genre called *diatribe*.

Derivatives of *diatribê* and *diatribo* occur no more than 5 times, and each time in the non-technical meaning of 'occupation' or 'pastime'.

To be fair, the term *dialexis* does not occur in Maximus' speeches either, and the verb *dialegomai* and derivatives are used 14 times, among which there are only two casual and common-sensical hints to Maximus' own practice of speaking.[7] Yet the hypothesis that what Maximus was doing was in fact described by the ancients as *dialexeis* yields more fruitful results when we want to situate his practice in his intellectual world.

As a matter of fact, the term '*dialexis*' already points to philosophical as well as rhetorical/sophistic contexts. The *rhetorical* connotation of the term '*dialexis*' has to do with sophistic practices, which were no doubt popular in Maximus' time. *Dialexis* is here used as a synonym for *lalia* or *prolalia*, a short introduction to an elaborate declamation by a reputed speaker.[8] What connects Maximus' speeches to the style of such an introduction are the relative concision of each individual speech, the rhetorical embellishments, and the rather informal communicational tone between the speaker and his public. However, reducing Maximus' style, content, and aims to the sophistic background of his age cannot entirely account for the philosophical flavour of Maximus' discourse. Moreover, the *dialexeis* do not give the impression of being mere introductions to more elaborate speeches, which makes it quite unlikely that the sophistic background was immediately understood to be the most important reason to name Maximus' speeches *dialexeis*.

The term '*dialexis*' is obviously also linked to *philosophy* by its being derived from the verb *dialegomai*, which is reminiscent of Socrates' much imitated and redefined dialectical practices.[9] The connection between this philosophical tradition and Maximus' practices may in fact have been a justification of the true philosophical character of Maximus' speeches. Moreover, as Luc Van der Stockt has observed in Plutarch, the term '*dialegomai*' (with derivatives such as *dialexis* and *dialogos*) is not solely used for actual dialogues, but is extended to

7 See Max. *Or*. 40.2: "Καὶ ἵνα μὴ περὶ κάλλους σοι μόνον *διαλέγωμαι*, …", and *Or*. 40.3: "Πείθω δέ γε οὐδέν τι μᾶλλον περὶ τῶν ἀρετῶν *διαλεγόμενος*, …" For the Greek text of Maximus' *dialexeis*, I am inclined to follow Trapp's 1994 edition, which contains a larger number of editorial interpretations and suggestions of previous scholars, and thus delivers a more readable and accessible reconstruction of the actual text. Koniaris' 1995 edition is more conservative in nature. Where I do divert from Trapp's reading, I indicate this in the footnote.

8 See Russell (1983), 77–79; and Anderson (1993), 53–55.

9 For a more detailed analysis of the term *dialexis* in the history of philosophy, see Puiggali (1983), 23–24.

a monological style of preaching about philosophical themes.[10] Geert Roskam, for his part, has argued that, if Plutarch is indeed referring to the work *That a philosopher should converse especially with men in power* in his talk *On monarchy, democracy, and oligarchy*, the former was indeed labelled as a *dialexis* by the Chaeronean author himself.[11] This in turn enables us to conclude—but not without caution—that the term *dialexis* is in this case used to describe an educational lecture, presented orally at a public convention, aimed at a more varied and possibly also larger audience than the mere specialists in the field of philosophy, concerning a theme that has some wider societal and ethical relevance. Indeed, even if the word '*dialexis*' does not occur *nominatim* to describe the speeches of other writers, there are still some texts which show that Maximus' practice of philosophical teaching in oral lectures about specific topics is not unparalleled among his contemporaries,[12] which renders the educational context of Maximus' speeches all the more plausible.[13]

Probably the most compelling account on what a *dialexis* meant to Imperial Greeks is offered in Philostratus, whose description of the term closely resembles Van der Stockt's and Roskam's observations in Plutarch. When Philostratus talks about the life of Apollonius of Tyana, he narrates how this sage at a certain stage started to discourse in public:

> He gave his first discourse (*διάλεξιν*) to the Ephesians from the steps of the temple. He did not use the Socratic method (οὐχ ὥσπερ οἱ Σωκρατικοί), but drawing his listeners' minds and interest away from all other subjects, he advised them to study only philosophy, and to fill Ephesus with seriousness rather than idleness and arrogance, of which he found a great deal.
>
> Phil. *VA*. 4.2; transl.: C.P. JONES

10 See Van der Stockt (2000), 98–99. See, for the 'genre' of the conference in Plutarch, also La Matina (2000).

11 See Roskam (2009a), 25–28, with, in the end, a short comparison with Maximus' *dialexeis*.

12 Trapp (1997b), 1973 mentions Arrian's *Discourses of Epictetus*, Gellius' *Attic nights*, and Plutarch's *On listening* as sources for our understanding of the philosophical teaching practices in the period of the Second Sophistic. He also points to commentaries and miscellaneous *problêmata* and *zêtêmata*, for instance in symposiastic literature.

13 See also Schouler (1973), 29: "En tant que dissertation et forme dogmatique d'enseignement, la *dialexis* a été léguée par l'ancienne sophistique non seulement aux écoles d'éloquence, mais aussi à celles de philosophie"; and Puiggali (1980), 31: "Les oeuvres de Maxime sont des διαλέξεις, c'est-à-dire des conférences au cours desquelles il s'adresse à des jeunes gens venus se cultiver." Cf. also Koniaris (1982), 113–114; Trapp (1997a), xx–xxii; and also, much earlier, Kämmel (1871).

A couple of important observations can be made about this passage. Firstly, the term '*dialexis*' is set apart from the less public activities that Apollonius had undertaken in the previous stages of his life, and it seems that Apollonius here addresses a wider public in Ephesus for the very first time. Secondly, Philostratus explicitly points out to his reader that Apollonius' *dialexis* is to be distinguished from Socrates' practices and those of his followers, which indicates exactly what Van der Stockt had already argued about Plutarch's broad use of the term '*dialexis*', viz. that the term is also used to describe a monological address of a certain audience, and not just a talk aimed at the refutation of an interlocutor's beliefs. Thirdly, Apollonius appears to have drawn his audience to philosophical matter, and it seems never to be doubted by Philostratus that this practice is fully in accordance with proper philosophy. Finally, given Philostratus' depiction of Apollonius as a model of a grand sophistic speaker, it is all the more likely that he thought of Apollonius as performing these *dialexeis* in an *eloquent* rhetorical style, just like Maximus makes ample use of captivating rhetorical figures and compositions.

When we look at the subject matter of Apollonius' public speeches, we see that he addresses popular themes that potentially concerned a great crowd of listeners. We encounter themes in Ephesus such as idle entertainment (4.2) and community (4.3), and later, in Olympia, "useful subjects like wisdom, courage, chastity, in short every virtue there is" (4.31; transl.: C.P. Jones). It thus seems that the *dialexis* is the prime moment when the philosopher steps into the public arena and addresses topics and issues that concern an audience of common people as well as more specialized philosophers. A *dialexis* does not sell out on a philosopher's credibility, but is entirely compatible with his philanthropic desire to be useful for his fellow citizens.

It is not entirely clear whether we can conclude from these passages that the term '*dialexis*' was already used by Apollonius himself, even though this seems to be a plausible assumption, given that Plutarch already made use of a very similar conception of public lecturing. We *can* in fact be certain that it was at least known to Philostratus, but his explanatory remark concerning the non-Socratic nature of Apollonius' *dialexis* may indicate that by Philostratus' time, the term had already become less familiar to describe this practice of philosophical lecturing. This would then imply that Philostratus did follow the vocabulary use of Apollonius' own day. In any case, for an author like Maximus, who operated between the time of Apollonius and that of Philostratus, it is quite likely that his philosophical orations were in fact described as '*dialexeis*', in more or less the same vein as Apollonius' discourses.

The term '*dialexis*' has thus abandoned the original ties with Socrates' practice of refuting common beliefs by means of a dialectical reasoning, but this

does not strip the entire practice from its philosophical flavour. The Academics and the Peripatetics developed the practice of arguing both in favour of and against a general philosophical dilemma in what was labelled a *thesis* or a *quaestio infinita*, and this practice was apparently conceived, at least within the confines of these schools, as a genuinely philosophical exercise, even though it has also been picked up by teachers of rhetoric as one of their *progymnasmata*. Marian Szarmach has argued that Maximus' *dialexeis* ought to be interpreted as precisely such rhetorical exercises, which, according to Szarmach, also explains the topical character of the arguments.[14] On the basis of the evidence in Plutarch and Philostratus, however, I believe that Szarmach's interpretation leans a little too much to the rhetorical side, and insufficiently takes into account that only a few of Maximus' *dialexeis* argue both sides of a dilemma, and most often seem to make a clear doctrinal case on ethical or physical matters, which is subsequently authoritatively communicated to the audience. Therefore, while the existence of the *thesis* as a valid instrument in philosophical schools has in all likelihood functioned as a firm legitimation of rhetorical argumentation techniques within the field of philosophy, a *dialexis* cannot merely be equated with it.

In sum, Maximus' *dialexeis* may not have ample parallels within Imperial culture that are known to us, but it seems as if they were probably not conceived as some exceptional invention by its author. They rather seem to rely on a wide tradition of philosophical lecturing that was also practised by revered philosophers such as Apollonius and Plutarch—and Epictetus' orations are not far from hitting the same mark, even though Arrian labelled them *diatribes* rather than *dialexeis*, and there are some interesting discursive differences between Epictetus and Maximus on which we will elaborate later. There appears to have been a contextual connotation concerning the term *dialexis* indicating that it is not so much a stringent logical exposition for a public of philosophical specialists, as it is an open communication with a wider public of people taking interest in philosophical themes, but not necessarily devoting their entire life to it. In the case of Apollonius and Plutarch, such a type of popular communication appears as only one facet of their wider philosophical undertakings. Whether the same applies for Maximus is, for a lack of more extant texts from his hand, impossible to determine.

14 See Szarmach (1985), *passim* for an extensive analysis of the topical character of Maximus' speeches.

1.2 *Reading Maximus' Orations as a Performance*

It may by now be clear that the *dialexeis* cannot be conceived of without an understanding of the performative goal for which they were designed. The context of Maximus' speeches thus calls for an interpretation in line with their oral character. Unfortunately, however, the only starting point for such an interpretation is the written text that has come down to us from the manuscript tradition. We can ask ourselves whether Maximus has ever performed these speeches or has merely written them down, yet this question has only minor interpretative consequences, for even if they were never performed, the discursive tone of the *dialexeis*, with its direct address to the public and the speaker's self-representation as an orating individual, obviously calls for an interpretation *as a performance*, and this both for a modern and an ancient reader. If we want to bring these writings back to life, we must thus be aware of some specific implications that the spoken context may entail.

First of all, there is the undeniable close contact between author and listeners. The author of the *dialexeis* is a tangible and visible person for his present audience. Given this very small distance between both parties, the speaker's entire appearance may count as a pledge for the credibility of the speech's content. As is often the case, the confident orator establishes a rapport with his audience in which his own performed person—ideally—guarantees the value of his ideas. This situation can render the speaker's hand either stronger or weaker, and also shapes a framework for questioning the performer's own education, in a way that might render him—as well as his speech—quite vulnerable.[15] The performativity of the *dialexeis* thus urges Maximus to come up with a credible establishment of his ethos as well as a convincing discourse. It seems therefore quite justified to speak in my subsequent analysis about an author who, *in his direct contact with his public of listeners*, displays certain intentions as to what he wants them to do and to believe, and who is consciously trying to guide his audience into the desired directions.

15 Cf. the interrelation of culture and official occasions in Bourdieu (1979), 451–452: "La "culture" (…) est une des composantes fondamentales de ce qui fait l'homme accompli dans sa définition dominante, en sorte que la privation est perçue comme mutilation essentielle, qui atteint la personne dans son identité et sa dignité d'homme, condamnant au silence dans toutes les situations officielles, où il faut "paraître en public", se montrer devant les autres, avec son corps, ses manières, son langage." On Maximus' specific cultural climate, in which rhetoric was of major importance, see Trapp (2007a), 235: "Rhetorical education directed attention to the external surface of the physical self, what others perceived of one visually and aurally, and to the self as public performance."

Secondly, in order to offer a proper assessment of Maximus' rhetorical practices, one is obliged to link these to the performative context, where the immediate effect of baffling verbal embellishment is intensely sought after. Much of the fame and honour with which the orators of the Second Sophistic were granted was intricately intertwined with their public appearance and performance, and was therefore radically rooted in the present. It seems sensible to assume that, even if Maximus took an interest in his own afterlife, he must have hoped to achieve his posthumous fame via a successful reception by his immediate listeners. Besides, we find no concrete indications that the author was interested in his own afterlife (apart, perhaps, from the obvious existence of a written version of his speeches, but the main goal of this publication may just as well have been to ensure a more significant expansion of Maximus' renown among his contemporaries). This implies that if we want to focus on the aforementioned intentions of our philosophical orator, we should principally direct our attention to his immediate communication with his audience, and should regard our own scholarly position as that of an outsider looking into a more narrow form of direct oral communication of which we can at best become a privileged witness rather than an actual addressee.

Thirdly, the social function of the *dialexeis* may be thought of somewhat differently as a result of their oral character. The dynamics of oral literacy are more intense than those of written accounts. Goody and Watt offer a good impression of what texts can mean in so-called 'traditional societies': "The transmission of the verbal elements of culture by oral means can be visualized as a long chain of interlocking conversations between members of the group. Thus all beliefs and values, all forms of knowledge, are communicated from the material content of the cultural tradition, whether it be cave-paintings or hand-axes, they are stored only in human memory."[16] Of course, Goody and Watt present a society in which the transmission of knowledge solely rests on oral transmission, and this was not the case in the bookish culture of Imperial Greece. Yet, it is quite probable that the oral transmission of knowledge as in the *dialexeis* could partially be used as a functional replacement of learning through books. In any case, the oral character and the performativity of Greek *paideia* may not only call for a reassessment of the contextual setting of the *dialexeis*, but also more profoundly for a different interpretation of the author's social position.

Finally, on a textual level, we should be aware of the fortunate position of the modern scholar of Maximus, who has the opportunity to choose his own

16 Goody—Watt (1968), 29.

reading tempo, to stop and reconsider his interpretation, to shift his attention from free associations to possible sources of certain fragments without losing the overall picture, and to leaf back and compare some significant passages with others. The situation at hand does of course not imply that a scholar should not do such practices (he is a scholar, after all), but the results of his analysis should afterwards be reconsidered in the light of the momentary character of the encounter between Maximus and his public, where Maximus holds firm control over the tempo of the verbal flood and the argumentation. This may, at least to a certain extent, explain why some orations are less consistently structured than one might expect from a philosophical *exposé*. We may even ask ourselves if this was *überhaupt* a problem for Maximus' public, and if this mode of lecturing does not also testify to the swiftness and creativity of the philosophical orator, who is able to break out of the 'safe' bunker of logical and dogmatic thought processes in search for those subjects which provide him with vantage points to reveal his verbal splendour.[17] In any case, the continuous awareness of the rhetorical and therefore momentary nature of the *dialexeis* may contribute to the overall appreciation of Maximus' achievements. It may invite us to look beyond the borders of purely coherent thought, and discover the fruitful human ability to reshape one's thought in serving one's own argumentation.

After all, we should not forget that rhetorical performance, just like fictional story-writing, has the ability to shape reality into a befitting narrative, and that, consequently, someone's words may just as much reflect his own tendentious aspirations as the 'objective' reality. Maximus' speeches may seem to offer an innocent representation of himself, his world, and the tradition, but

17 A good example of this seems to be the end of the two orations on *daimones* (*Or.* 8–9). In *Or.* 9.7, Maximus ends a rather technical rhetorical and philosophical elaboration on the nature of *daimones* with some concrete examples of *daimones* like Achilles, Hector and the Dioscuri. The last two sentences of the speech have left some interpreters puzzling: "I myself have never seen either Hector or Achilles, but I have seen the Dioscuri, in the form of bright stars, righting a ship in a storm. I have seen Asclepius, and that not in a dream. I have seen Heracles, in waking reality." To my mind, the rhetorical effect of this passage prevails over its truthfulness. For Maximus, I believe, these closing sentences have three important rhetorical purposes. First, the passage affirms Maximus' privileged position as an authoritative speaker, for he is a man who has seen these *daimones* with his own eyes. Second, it adds some authority to the general argument itself, since Maximus has confirmed it by his *autopsia*. Third, the ambiguity of the utterance, which has already intrigued a good deal of scholars, must have caused an almost identical reaction in Maximus' audience. By introducing this incredible sublime report at the very end of his speech, Maximus must have left his audience with a mixture of suspicion and amazement.

appearances can deceive. There is an important self-occupied facet in Maximus' speeches, and it is above all in his functional representations of traditions, events, persons, stories, and opinions that Maximus' self-advertising discourse unfolds itself.

2 Communication and Pedagogy

Unlike in the cases of, for instance, Favorinus and Plutarch, we have no external sources that may point us to Maximus' original public. Yet, instead of resigning in the face of uncertainty, we can discover some elements in the *dialexeis* that suggest plausible assumptions regarding the audience, the pedagogical context of the speech delivery, and the discursive tone with which Maximus addresses his listeners. The separate parts of this subchapter form an organic whole, as they contribute to each other's plausibility and thus deepen our understanding of the actual historical communication process with which Maximus entertained his public.

2.1 *The Formal and Thematic Unity of the Corpus*

Before we determine the audience that Maximus' speeches most likely addressed, it is worthwhile to ask ourselves whether there actually *is* one specific group of people who formed the model addressees of the speeches, or whether Maximus was merely lecturing to casual people passing by. As we are about the show, the formal and thematic continuity of the *dialexeis* seems to argue against the latter hypothesis.

In order to bring out the consistent nature of Maximus' discourses, it is worthwhile to compare his corpus to that of other intellectuals of his era, such as Dio Chrysostom or Plutarch of Chaeronea. Even though we cannot be certain whether Dio performed every oration in exactly the same manner as it was recorded, the variety of topics and settings invoked in his works calls for diverse interpretations in function of the specific occasion. Throughout his oeuvre, Dio addresses the Emperor, some unidentifiable listeners interested in philosophy, the citizens of Prusa, people attending the Olympic Games, *et cetera*. Both the discursive tone and the factual allusions to the location of the speeches appear to vary quite widely, and seem to adapt themselves neatly to each specific context. As a result, the length of the speeches is far from similar, ranging from a very short treatment of the interpretation of Homer (53) to the extensive discussions of proper kingship (1–4). Dio's oeuvre thus forms an overview of a lifetime career, during which the speaker realized diverse communicational goals against diverse backgrounds.

Plutarch, for his part, frames many of his treatises as inspired by specific demands or specific occasions. The project of the *Lives* is dedicated to Sosius Senecio, as is the *Table talk*. We can here see that not even the same dedicatee calls for a similar type of work, as the historiographical and ethical tone of the *Lives* is entirely different from the dialogical tone of the convivial discussions reported in *Table talk*. The variety of Plutarch's oeuvre thus stands beyond reproach, and may well have contributed to his great popularity among modern scholars.

This brief comparison with Dio and Plutarch is primarily introduced to make Maximus' orations stand out as strikingly consistent, a consistency that in all likelihood results from the fact that his works are recordings of speeches that were held during a relatively short span of time. Moreover, the great variety of length that we observe in Dio and Plutarch is relatively moderate in Maximus' case. Even though the longest oration *On God* is about three times as long as the shortest oration *On good health*, this is still a reasonably moderate difference in size compared to other speeches from this period, which may be more than ten times longer than Maximus' longest oration. The eleventh oration *On God*, which is, discursively speaking, entirely in line with the other speeches, seems rather to represent a moment where the speaker, inspired by his elevated subject, decides to entertain his audience somewhat (but not outrageously) longer than usually. All in all, it thus seems fair to say that Maximus' corpus is very consistent in its offering of small bits of communication about relevant philosophical topics, a consistency which also appears from the steady authorial tone *vis-à-vis* the audience, to be analysed later.

We do not know whether Maximus restricted himself to the delivery of one oration a day, but the short nature of the speeches makes every impression of breaking down a philosophical argument, sometimes even quite a complicated one, to an easily digestible portion of knowledge to take home. While an occasional bystander could of course benefit from such a discourse, a one-time exposure to such a tiny philosophical case-study, so to speak, does not really seem to turn a listener into the philosopher which Maximus seems to have in mind as his prime addressee. The supposition that the orations are directed to one specific audience who came to seek concrete philosophical instruction therefore seems to gain a lot of plausibility.

A further corroboration of this supposition presents itself in the thematic links between different *dialexeis*. Maximus quite frequently seems to start from the assumption that people know what is said in the previous *dialexeis*. This appears already from the *dissoi logoi* in Maximus' corpus (15–16, 23–24, and 39–40), which appear to gain more relevance when read (or heard) alongside one

another, and from the speeches which together deal with one single topic, such as those about Socrates' love (18–21) or about the choice between virtue and pleasure (29–33). Furthermore, it is probably no coincidence that Maximus' eleventh speech starts with a short reference to the *daimones*, a theme which he treated only two speeches earlier (8–9), while the tenth speech on learning and recollection provides a thematic bridge between the previous and the following speech.[18]

This is not to say, however, that the argument for one and the same audience is entirely cogent. The orations seem to be linked to each other in a manner reminiscent of a modern soap opera: just like, in case of the latter, a viewer ought not to be discouraged from following the series after having missed an episode, the set-up of Maximus' orations, which always have their own proper introduction and reach a relatively satisfactory conclusion in the course of one speech, seems to make it fairly easy to step in again after having missed out on one or several orations; yet, the overall benefits of the orations may be most accessible to those who are willing to show up on a regular basis, as they will gain a more in-depth perspective on the broad field of ethical and other philosophical problems. Those who just wished to be entertained by Maximus' rhetorical handling of the topic may have left again after one oration, but if we take Maximus' assertion in the first oration, to be discussed below, seriously, his orations are not so much meant for rhetorical display as for serious philosophical instruction. The people who actually came to get a more profound overview of the field of philosophy and were convinced that the Tyrian was capable of providing such an introduction, must indeed have felt inclined to persist in attending and thus gradually broadening their philosophical knowledge.

To sum up: in Maximus' *dialexeis*, we find a corpus that is both formally and thematically consistent. We find no allusions to a change of setting; rather, it seems assumed that the people who came to see Maximus already knew what they were in for when he started his orations with a formal introduction to the proposed theme. We find internal allusions on Maximus' part, which seems to suggest that at least part of his audience came to listen to him on a regular basis and knew which themes he had treated before. In addition, the fairly brief nature of the talks suggests that they were not composed as an end in themselves, but rather as a contribution to a more encompassing course that aims to survey the field of philosophy in a relatively comprehensive manner.

18 See Trapp (2007b), 477.

2.2 *Maximus' Audience*

Now that we have established that it was quite likely that Maximus' oeuvre was, at least in part, attended by the same group of listeners, we can look for some additional characteristics of this model audience. Mostly on the basis of the address ὦ νέοι in Maximus' first speech, Koniaris and Trapp describe Maximus' audience as a group of young men.[19] Moreover, a passage in oration 11 on Plato's theology seems to suggest that his public was not yet acquainted with Plato's texts and viewpoints.[20] Besides that, there are also some typical features in Maximus' communicational style, to be discussed below, which suggest that the *dialexeis* are intended for a youthful audience in search of philosophical knowledge and ethical instruction. For these reasons, Maximus' audience in all likelihood at least partly—but not necessarily exclusively!—consisted of young adolescents of about 16 to 20 years old; *not necessarily* exclusively, because the careful rhetorical handling of the philosophical material may have lend itself to a wider exposition in a theatre or another public place, in a fashion quite similar to Philostratus' report of Apollonius' *dialexeis*. Just like performing sophists took rhetorical school exercises to the stage, it is far from implausible that Maximus transposed the pedagogical treatment of philosophical topics into a public performance that was accessible to a wider audience than just his pupils. Yet, even if this process of expansion from an intimate course in philosophy to a full-blown theatrical performance had indeed taken place in the case of the *dialexeis*, the original pedagogical aims and tone have certainly not fully disappeared from Maximus' agenda.

It thus seems sensible to take Koniaris' and Trapp's hypothesis as a starting point for our analysis of the *dialexeis*, for at least two more reasons than the ones given in their studies. A first reason is the relatively low degree of sophisticated interplay between the contemporary world and the world related to in the *dialexeis* themselves. Authors such as Dio Chrysostom and Aelius Aristides, who occasionally addressed large audiences in which there must have been other astute *pepaideumenoi*, generally tend to create a lively dialogue between the contemporary context in which they spoke, and the classical texts that were supposed to be part of their educational background, thus evoking their listeners' awareness of possible playful intertextuality and multiple levels of meaning.[21] A good example of this procedure is Dio's *Fourth oration on kingship*,

19 See Koniaris (1982), 113–114 and Trapp (1997a), xx–xxii. For the technical use of νέοι, see Forbes (1933) (however, with reservations in Trapp (1997a), xxii n. 24).

20 Koniaris (1982), 113 on the πρώτην ὁμιλίαν in Max. *Or.* 11.2.

21 In Whitmarsh (2001), it is argued most conspicuously that a large amount of the literature

which is staged as a dialogue between the Cynic Diogenes and the ruler Alexander the Great, but which, on a more sophisticated level, can also be interpreted as a dialogue between the self-styled 'philosopher' Dio and the contemporary ruler Trajan. By contrast, no such interplay appears to be found in Maximus' *dialexeis*, which generally display a remarkable form of *Weltabgewandtheit*.[22] In this respect, Maximus' approach quite closely resembles that of contemporary practices in rhetorical education. As Manfred Kraus illustrates and discusses, the collections of *progymnasmata* composed by several authors show a remarkable thematic continuity, in that all handbooks were stably oriented towards the political and moral beliefs of classical Athens.[23] Although this procedure does not deprive these exercises from their ideological meaning, the ideology should rather be situated in the mere performance of *Weltabgewandtheit* (along with processes of selection and reorientation of ancient material) rather than in the playful interplay between contemporary issues and ancient texts.[24] The fact that this aspect, on the one hand, connects Maximus' *dialexeis* with contemporary school practices, and, on the other, sets it apart from public speeches that were performed in front of astute *pepaideumenoi*, may indicate that they were primarily written and staged in the interest of a group of non-specialists who were still in the learning stages and who may, as a result, have preferred a direct and plain access to relevant information about ancient facts and texts over a cunning dialogue between past and present, full of playful allusions that only an already highly educated man may have been able to appreciate.

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of the Imperial period, stretching from philosophical works to the ancient Greek novels, aims at such a cunning reconciliation of contemporary issues (mainly the construction of cultural identity) with 'texts' from previous times, thus negotiating a distinctive place for Greekness within the Roman Empire.

22 See, e.g., Trapp (1997a), xxxviii. This does not mean that there is no interest at all in the contemporary world from Maximus' part, but this interest is only achieved indirectly, not through any creative political statements of the sort that appears elsewhere in Second Sophistic literature.

23 Kraus (2011). On the purpose of this type of education, see Corbeill (2007), 82: "Society functions best when the fledging imperial speakers are taught to repeat to one another; from a multiplicity of perspectives, how hierarchies remain stable and impermeable."

24 On the potential subversiveness of the performance of a seemingly innocent discourse from the past, see Connolly (2001), 352: "Closer examination of a set of writers discussing contemporary education will show that placing these two ethical systems under the same yoke—that is, putting democratic Athenian texts to work inculcating an imperial elite *habitus*—may be performed only through an intricate process of selection, revision, recontextualization and censorship."

A second argument in favour of a less experienced audience is the length and the formal continuity of the *dialexeis*, which we already discussed above. The thematic and formal continuity leads to an interpretation of the *dialexeis* as an intensive course offering a cumulative coverage of the field of philosophy, ideally intended for an audience of returning listeners, even if the rhetorical form of Maximus' expositions must have allowed occasional attendants to join in at any stage. Moreover, although Maximus' speeches may sometimes lack rigour and coherence, the amalgam of all his performances may have reaffirmed his audience's belief that they were getting a fairly extensive instruction concerning 'all' relevant things to know about philosophy. The absence of a stringent thematic linkage between all of the *dialexeis* suggests that Maximus was definitely not after a systematic treatment of philosophical topics, as for instance in Alcinoüs' *Handbook of Platonism*, but this does not mean that the eventual effect of his numerous performances could not be a welcome addition to a listener's philosophical repertoire. As we will argue in our eventual interpretation of the working of the *dialexeis*, their short and functional representation of a philosophical problem not only provides an overview of the relevant things to know about it, but also already provides an example of how this problem can eloquently be solved in a concrete and concise manner, fit for a learned discussion at a banquet or at another occasion where philosophical speculation or instruction was wanted.

Unfortunately, we cannot assess just how selective this 'full' treatment of philosophy from Maximus' part really was, given that there is no way to know how many *dialexeis* have become lost in the process of transmission, or were never recorded in the first place. The selection that we do possess suggests that some issues that seem of paramount importance to a modern scholar of Imperial philosophy, such as Sceptical epistemology, the status of the World Soul, or speculations about physical causes, are strikingly neglected in Maximus' popularizing overview. However, given Maximus' authoritative stance on philosophical topics in general, we should strongly doubt whether these holes in Maximus' representation of the field of philosophy were believed to be problematic by an average member of his audience.

The fact, moreover, that the *dialexeis* cumulatively add up to a fairly broad (albeit selective) overview of the field of philosophy may also point to another characteristic of our less experienced audience. Whereas some reports concerning sophistic performance seem to indicate that public declamations were attended by different social classes, the nature of the *dialexeis*, which seems to have been designed for a relatively frequent convention, makes it less likely that people from the lower classes could afford to attend Maximus' speeches on a regular basis. After all, when a reputed speaker such as Aelius Aristides trav-

elled around, he probably gave one large speech for the people of the city he was visiting, an event during which people from the lower classes could perhaps (unusually) abandon their daily pursuits. However, the demand of showing up several days in a row for an intensive course in philosophy was probably too pressing to enable either an ordinary citizen or a busy nobleman holding public offices to attend all the speeches. The combination of the fact that Maximus alludes to previous speeches of his and the fact that frequent attendance at the speech performances was probably unmanageable for people who had to work for a living makes it likely that Maximus' audience consisted in the first place of young aristocratic citizens who had the time to pay a frequent visit to the Tyrian's lectures. A neat parallel presents itself in the case of Epictetus' *diatribes* as recorded by Arrian, which seem to have been open to a fairly diverse public of listeners, but which were primarily designed for a core of relatively young aristocratic students who came to Nicopolis to join Epictetus' teachings on a regular basis for a period of several weeks, months, or years.

This is, however, not the only reason to assume that Maximus' public consisted of aristocrats. In some cases, the subject matter of the *dialexeis* seems especially designed for the interest of the happy few. A good example of such a topic is the choice between an active civic life or a contemplative life (15–16), a choice that is only relevant if one has already attained the power and the freedom (understood as the financial independence) to make such a decision. Quite significantly, in his presentation of the dilemma, Maximus only differentiates between being powerful and being contemplative, both of which presuppose an aristocratic background.

> Διίστησιν δὲ ἤδη καὶ τύχη· τὸν μὲν γὰρ δυνάμει καὶ πράξει ἀναγκαίᾳ περιέβαλεν, τὸν δὲ σχολῇ καὶ ἡσυχίᾳ προσηνεῖ· ὧν τὸν μὲν ἐπαινῶ ἐν τῷ ἀναγκαίῳ ἀνδριζόμενον, τὸν δὲ καὶ μακαρίζω καὶ ἐπαινῶ, μακαρίζω μὲν τῆς σχολῆς, ἐπαινῶ δὲ τῆς ἱστορίας.
>
> Fortune too differentiates man from man, clothing the one in power and the life of action that this necessitates, while wrapping the other in leisure and sweet repose. The former I praise for his steadfastness in the duty he cannot avoid, but it is the latter for whom I have both praise and admiration: admiration for his leisure, praise for what he relates.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 16.5[25]

25 All translations of Maximus' text are from Trapp (1997a). Where I have modified the translation, I have indicated this in a footnote.

On the other hand, speeches addressing a topic from which an ordinary person might have actually benefited, such as the choice between the life of a soldier or that of a farmer (23–24), contain so little concrete advice that it would probably have frustrated someone for whom this topic presented an actual dilemma.

There are also other passages in the *dialexeis* that indicate that Maximus' own perspective is that of an aristocrat. See, for instance, the following excerpt:

> Ὁ μὲν γὰρ φιλόσοφος βαρὺ καὶ πρόσαντες τοῖς πολλοῖς ἄκουσμα, *ὡς ἐν πένησιν ὁ πλούσιος θέαμα βαρύ*, καὶ ἐν ἀκολάστοις ὁ σώφρων, καὶ ἐν δειλοῖς ὁ ἀριστεύς· οὐ γὰρ ἀνέχονται *αἱ πονηρίαι τὰς ἀρέτας* ἐν αὐταῖς καλλωπιζομένας.
>
> A philosopher is a difficult and unpleasant thing for most people to listen to, just as a rich man is an unpleasant sight to paupers, a prudent man to the profligate, and a hero to cowards: vices cannot abide virtues preening themselves in their midst.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 4.6

In this passage, the perspective to sympathize with is no doubt rather the rich man than the poor people, as the structure of the sentence clearly ranks the former among the positive characters (the philosopher, the prudent man and the hero). Poverty is thus regarded as a πονηρία which cannot stand the 'virtuous' possession of money.

From a sociological perspective, Maximus thus appears to address a public of social peers belonging to the elite. When we focus on Maximus' discursive self-image, his listeners ought not to be seen as *intellectual* peers of his, but rather as less knowledgeable people who were willing to acknowledge their intellectual inferiority in order to receive some concrete philosophical instruction from a connoisseur in the field.

2.3 *Maximus' Pedagogical Self-Presentation*

Apart from the arguments discussed above, on the basis of a few passages that are scattered throughout the *dialexeis*, we can also count on the fortunate possession of Maximus' programmatic first *dialexis*, in which he defines his pedagogical aims and paradigm more clearly than anywhere else in his oeuvre. This programmatic oration has been discussed in closer detail in an article of mine in *The Classical Quarterly*,[26] but for the purpose of our reconstruction of

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26 See Lauwers (2009b).

Maximus' audience, it is worthwhile to offer a reasonably extensive summary of its most important viewpoints.

First, however, some qualification concerning the order of the *dialexeis* is required. It could be argued that we cannot know for sure whether this oration was truly meant as an introduction to the subsequent series of speeches, given that the order in which the texts have come down to us has been modified through the intervention of recent scholarship. Yet, since Koniaris has offered strong *textual* reasons for how the manuscript tradition must have disrupted the original order, there is more ground for considering this oration the first of the series than just its introductory content. Furthermore, even if this oration was not originally the first introductory speech, which is quite unlikely, it is still valid to read it as a metapoetic statement on the author's part, just as we can do for the twenty-second or the twenty-fifth oration.[27] Since the *dialexeis* present us with a cumulative account of philosophy, but not with a systematic overview, the order in which the speeches appear is not entirely indicative of their relative importance in the oeuvre. In this respect, the speech could fulfil its function regardless of its place in the oeuvre. Still, it remains true that in as much as Maximus was concerned with matters of self-authorization and the advertisement of his philosophical paradigm, the choice for this particular topic at the beginning of his lecture series is a very apt one.

My analysis of the first *dialexis* starts from the notion of pedagogical narcissism,[28] which consists of the idea that some teachers, through their perceived exemplarity, inspire their students to become just like themselves. While our modern conception of pedagogy rather relies on the student's *self*-development and therefore condemns this didactic side-effect, the reduplication of the teacher's capabilities and personality was, at least in rhetorical education but also in many other areas of pedagogy, quite a common and accepted educational paradigm within classical Antiquity, in that teachers used their own socio-cultural success as a firm argument to attract interested students. This notion of pedagogical narcissism is also at work in Maximus' first *dialexis*.

In §1, Maximus argues that, if an actor is allowed to talk in versatile voices, this acceptance should *a fortiori* apply to the philosopher. According to this statement, the ideal philosopher should be capable of adjusting his tone to the situation at hand, as the multiplicity of life itself thus demands some appropriate modulations of a philosopher's *logos*. In a fashion quite similar to a Plutarch or a Dio Chrysostom, Maximus thus seems to leave the door open to

27 For the twenty-second oration, see below. For the twenty-fifth oration, see Lauwers (2012).
28 See Amirault (1995).

a more active form of philosophy as well, engaging with society whenever the situation calls for it. In § 3, the philosopher is likened to a warrior possessing the skills of both a hoplite and an archer. The suggestion is thus made that the philosopher should have the possibility to choose from his wide verbal 'armoury' the most appropriate type of *logos*.

In the next two paragraphs (4–5), Maximus shows how philosophy also enjoys a comfortable edge over athletics. The confrontation between these fields is in itself not an innocent one, as it prepares the listeners' minds for a competitive definition of philosophy, which also fares well in agonistic contexts such as the verbal clashes generally associated with the Second Sophistic movement.

After this tendentious comparison between athletics and philosophy, in § 6–7, Maximus brings his own personality into play, offering his own socio-cultural success as a pledge for the assertion that those who came to see his performance for various forms of instruction are in fact in good hands. In an audacious passage, Maximus despises the praise that he previously received from others—yet he still alludes to it!—and thus combines a seeming humility with a self-conscious assertion of his fame. We here witness a connection between Maximus' ideal philosopher—embodied by himself for this moment—and the world of the Second Sophistic, where verbal splendour was a prime requisite in the search for cultural authority. Since the ideal philosopher should be able to adjust his tone to the situation at hand, he must also be capable of dealing with the performative situation with which Maximus appears to find himself confronted. In this cunning type of reasoning, Maximus manages to establish a rapport between the field of philosophy and rhetorical mastery, by arguing that the latter is not necessarily in contradiction with the former's demands, but rather a proof of the speaker's devotion to the former.

In the first part of the seventh paragraph, Maximus likens his audience to birds that imitate a piper in order to become singers themselves. The implication of the comparison is that Maximus expects his public to learn philosophical discourse through imitation of the speaker, i.e. Maximus himself. This narcissistic conception of learning gives Maximus the opportunity to advertise himself without risking being accused of irrelevant self-display. After all, if the pupils in the audience are to become imitators of the speaker in front, it is very much in *their* interest that they get a full view of that speaker's merits and talents. As a result, Maximus abandons his humble philosophical tone and freely promotes his philosophical paradigm as being useful for those who want to become a rhetorician, a poet, or a politician.

However, through an interesting shift of tone (§ 7b), Maximus does not forget to return to his core business, viz. philosophy. After the boastful self-advertising

discourse of the previous section, Maximus switches his role again, displaying a philosophical humility towards those students who despise the world of rhetorical splendour and revere the truth instead. In this passage, Maximus seems to indicate that while he can be useful for a very diverse public with many different aspirations in life, philosophy is still regarded as the ultimate pursuit that encompasses all of the other disciplines and deserves, as such, Maximus' highest praise. Although Maximus seems to be making quite an accessible impression on an audience of non-specialists in philosophical matters, it nevertheless appears as if he is trying to win over to his philosophical cause those who merely wanted to be entertained.

In the eighth paragraph, Maximus formulates some criticisms that pertain to the philosophers who are too much occupied with pedantic reasonings and conjuring with words, a practice that is associated by Maximus with sophistry. It thus appears that he, in the same vein as some popularizing forms of Cynicism and Scepticism (see my discussion of Lucian and Sextus Empiricus in the previous chapter), decries a form of philosophy that loses touch with common sense and becomes a sterile and specialized discipline. Maximus appears to stand for a more worldly form of philosophy that can operate in the public arena and aspires to improve the minds of a wide variety of people.

Yet the question remains as to what extent such a worldly attitude is compatible with the philosophical tradition. The final two paragraphs of the speech (§ 9–10) appear to place Maximus' paradigm within the tradition so as to grant it some authority in its confrontation with less pompous and verbose ways of philosophizing. In the ninth paragraph, Maximus establishes that old age, poverty, and obscurity are not necessary requisites for being a sincere philosopher, a statement that is authorized through the example of Socrates, who also engaged with rich citizens, and through the example of the wealthy philosopher Aristippus. Finally, in the tenth paragraph, the conclusion is drawn that a philosopher must not be judged by his appearance, nor by age, nor by appearance, nor by social status. Maximus thus communicates to his audience that a high social status and a wealthy existence can well coexist with philosophical pursuits. He makes his philosophical paradigm quite accessible for those classes that are not necessarily willing to give up their aristocratic existence in order to become a philosopher. In a society where the pursuit of philosophy was very much respected and could produce some distinctive symbolic capital, this may have been exactly the message that an upper-class public wanted to hear. We hence encounter the seductive power of Maximus' paradigm for the aristocratic audience that we already identified above.

In the grand finale, Maximus asks for an actor (taking up that metaphor again) and a performer who can provide 'us' (an inclusive use of the first per-

son plural) with philosophical instruction. Through rhetorical innuendo, once again representative of his performed humility when it comes to philosophical matters, Maximus seems to portray himself as the answer to the audience's aristocratic demands, capable as he is of providing a type of philosophical guidance that does not ignore their social status.

As appears from this analysis, Maximus deploys some rhetorical techniques and reasonings that enable him to portray himself as a model fit for imitation by his audience. While some other views may conceive of this 'learning through mimesis' paradigm as thoroughly rhetorical and not compatible with philosophical self-development,[29] this narcissistic mode of pedagogy is here presented as a high-road to philosophical knowledge *and* socio-cultural success. This first oration also establishes a link between philosophical discourse and rhetorical prowess, by proclaiming that a philosopher ought to be able to adjust his tone to every situation. And given that Maximus appears to find himself in the performative context of delivering *dialexeis*, the fact that he can do so in a rhetorical style fit for the occasion is here offered as evidence that he is in fact a true philosopher. The implication for the audience is that by following the example of this philosophical orator, they too can combine philosophical wisdom and socio-cultural prosperity.

The first *dialexis* thus proves to be a valuable source for Maximus' self-conception as a philosophical orator and for the pedagogical context in which these texts ought to be interpreted. Again, this does not exclude the idea that some listeners may have come to Maximus just for rhetorical entertainment, but we can at least say that part of Maximus' philosophical credibility revolves around the pedagogical aims with which he appears to deliver his *dialexeis*. These aims also become apparent through an analysis of the discursive tone(s) of the orations, which further establish Maximus' dual position as an accessible insider and an authoritative instructor.

2.4 *The Communicative Tone of the* Dialexeis *a: Maximus the Accessible Insider*

As Michael Trapp rightly detected, accessibility is a very important facet of Maximus' philosophical persona.[30] In his search for a voice with which to address his aristocratic audience, he makes sure that he is seen as an insider to their world, and the most obvious way to do so is by appealing to the rhetorical language with which they have grown familiar during their education.

29 See, e.g., Roskam (2004) for Plutarch's position as a philosophical instructor.

30 Trapp (1997b), 1952.

Every sentence in the *dialexeis* affirms Maximus' mastery over the (artificially archaizing!) Attic language and the rhetorical effects that are expected to be part of a successful orator's repertoire.[31] Paradoxical as it may seem, when someone delivered a public speech in Greco-Roman culture, he was expected to turn his talk into an artful performance, which is why on such an occasion ordinary talk may have felt less 'normal' to an ancient ear than the astute handling of an age-old artificial language. Maximus' use of sophisticated rhetoric was thus not solely a shining accessory on an otherwise simple philosophical garment; it was a major element in gaining his audience's recognition as their spokesman.

Apart from the overall rhetorical style, there are some other rhetorical schemes that obviously contribute to Maximus' rhetoric of inclusion. To put matters a little more concretely, I propose to discuss these schemes in a fairly long paragraph from the *dialexeis*, in which Maximus gently leads his audience to a proper discussion of the usefulness of farmers:

> Φέρε καὶ ἐπὶ γεωργίας *θεασώμεθα* εἰ τοῦτον αὐτοῖς ἔχει τὸν τρόπον, ὅνπερ καὶ ἡ ἐν τῷ πολεμεῖν χειρουργία. Ἅπτονται ἄνθρωποι γῆς, οἱ μὲν σὺν δίκῃ, οἱ δὲ ἄνευ δίκης· σὺν δίκῃ μὲν κατὰ χρείαν καρποῦ, δίκης δὲ ἄνευ ἐπὶ χρηματισμῷ. Εἴη ἂν οὖν κἀνταῦθα ἡ δίαιτα οὐ ξυλλήβδην περὶ πάσης γεωργίας. Ἀλλὰ ἐπεὶ καὶ τοῦτο κοινὸν δικαίων καὶ μή, κοινὸν δ' ἦν καὶ τὸ πολεμεῖν ἑκατέρῳ τῷ γένει, *δέος μὴ λάθῃ ἐξαπατήσας ἡμᾶς ὁ λόγος οὗτος*, οὐ γεωργικῷ τὸ πολεμικόν, ἀλλὰ τῷ δικαίῳ τὸ ἄδικον παραβαλεῖν ἐθέλων. Δικαίους οὖν ἄμφω ὑποθέμενοι, καὶ τὸν πολεμικὸν καὶ τὸν γεωργικόν, τὸν μὲν ὑπ' ἀνάγκης ἐπὶ τὸ πολεμεῖν ἰόντα, τὸν δὲ ὑπὸ χρείας γεωργεῖν ἠναγκασμένον, οὕτως *σκοπῶμεν* περὶ ἑκατέρου. *Καίτοι τί ταῦτα λέγω;* Εἰ γὰρ ἐπ' ἀμφοῖν τὸ δίκαιον ἴσον, καὶ τὸ καλὸν ἴσον, καὶ ὁ ἔπαινος ἴσος, καὶ ἀπίασιν *ἡμῖν* ἄμφω νικηφόροι. *Βούλει τοίνυν ἀφελὼν τὸ δίκαιον ἑκατέρου, τὸ ἄδικον προσθείς, οὕτω σκοπεῖν;* Ἀλλὰ κἀνταῦθα ἐπ' ἀμφοῖν ἡ κακία ἐπανισουμένη, τὸν ἔπαινον ἐξ ἄμφοιν ἀφαιρεῖ. *Τῷ ἂν οὖν τις κρίναι τὸ λεγόμενον; Βούλει σοι φράσω; Καὶ δὴ λέγω.* Μαντεύεταί μοι ἡ ψυχή, κατὰ τοὺς Πλάτωνος λόγους, εἶναι τι ἀνθρώπων γένος, μήτε ἀρετῆς κομιδῇ ἐπήβολον, μήτ' εἰς κακίαν ἐσχάτην παντάπασιν ἐκκεκυλισμένον, βιοτεῦον δὲ ἐν δόξαις ὀρθαῖς, τροφῇ καὶ παιδεύσει ὑπὸ νόμῳ σώφρονι πολιτευόμενον. Τοῦτο τοίνυν τῶν ἀνθρώπων τὸ γένος διελόντες δίχα, τὸ μὲν παραδόντες τῇ γῇ, τὸ δὲ εἰς τὰ ὅπλα ἀποπέμψαντες, ἅτε ἀμφίβολον ὂν καὶ ἐν μεταιχμίῳ ἀρετῆς καὶ κακίας

31 For the politics of Atticism, see Swain (1996) and Schmitz (1997). For various aspects of *elocutio* in Maximus, see Trapp (1997b), 1960–1970. For an analysis of Maximus' Atticizing language use, see Dürr (1899).

> καθωρμισμένον, *θεασώμεθα* †ὑπὸ τῶν ἐπιτηδευμάτων ἑκάτερον, ὑπὸ ἑκατέρου πότερον ἐφ' ὁπότερον ἄγεται θᾶττον. *Θεασώμεθα* δὲ οὑτωσί.
>
> Let us consider whether matters are the same for our three categories in the case of farming as they are with the practice of war. Men till the soil, some justly, some unjustly: justly if they are looking to the utility of their produce, unjustly if they are looking only to make a profit. In this case too we are not trying to come to a single verdict that will apply universally to all possible kinds of farming. Since this activity is also practised both by the just and by the unjust, just as fighting was common to both categories, there is a risk that the argument may deceive us without our realizing it, by trying to compare not farming with fighting, but with unjust behavior. Let us then assume that both our fighter and our farmer are just men, the one going to war through the force of necessity, the other forced to farm from practical need, and let us examine each of them on this basis. But what is it that I have just said? If justice and honour and praise are all applicable to an equal degree in both cases, then we will have to allow both to emerge the winner. Should we then take justice away from both parties and substitute injustice, and consider the issue on that footing? No: because in that case also an equal share of wickedness on both sides would disqualify both equally from praise. How then might we seek to decide the issue? Shall I tell you? I will. My soul divines that, as Plato opines, there is a certain category of human beings who do not have a secure grasp on Virtue, but have not degenerated entirely into the worst educated in a stable community under sound laws. Let us take this category of men, which is ambivalent and occupies the no man's land between Virtue and Vice, and divide it in two, assigning half to the land and dispatching the other half to fight; and let us consider each group in the light of its own particular activity, to see which is the more readily led in which direction. *Let us consider it so*.[32]
>
> MAX. *Or*. 24.3

The passage contains a fairly dense set of discursive techniques that Maximus frequently deploys throughout his oeuvre. Noteworthy here is Maximus' recurrent use of the first person plural when he addresses his audience, thus highlighting his own participation in the group he is speaking to (cf. ἡμᾶς and ἡμῖν),

32 The last sentence is not translated in Trapp (1997a), 203. As far as the meaning is concerned, it is only important as an illustration of Maximus' inclusive rhetoric.

and especially Maximus' use of the exhortative subjunctive in the first person plural, occurring a relatively large number of times (cf. θεασώμεθα [3 times] and σκοπῶμεν).[33] These factors obviously facilitate the audience's identification with the speaker in front of them. Maximus' discourse thus creates the illusion that the audience is partaking in the reasoning process conducted in the speech, even if it is eventually Maximus who provides all the answers. The illusion of the audience's participation is also provoked by the recurrent use of questions (cf. Καίτοι τί ταῦτα λέγω;, Βούλει τοίνυν [...] οὕτω σκοπεῖν;, and Τῷ ἂν οὖν τις κρίναι τὸ λεγόμενον;), which are not really rhetorical questions (in that they do not already suggest an answer), but rather questions that raise the audience's interest and keep the flow of the speech going in an agreeable and informal manner. Furthermore, Maximus addresses his audience in a personal voice, emphasizing that he responds to *their* demands. The sentences Βούλει σοι φράσω; Καὶ δὴ λέγω represent the public as being eager to hear more from him, and he immediately shows his willingness to accommodate them. Maximus also displays some care for his audience's well-being by warning them against bad reasoning (cf. δέος μὴ λάθῃ ἐξαπατήσας ἡμᾶς ὁ λόγος οὗτος). The same care also appears from the very patient exposition of the reasoning conducted in the entire paragraph. Boring and redundant though they may appear to a modern ear, the philosophical expositions in Maximus' *dialexeis* generally reach a high degree of clarity, so that they could probably be comprehended by more people than only the top-notch attendants.[34]

It is always difficult to estimate the 'tone' of a speech delivery if we only possess the written version. Nevertheless, we can put forward some hypotheses concerning this tone in Maximus' discourse on the basis of the rhetorical schemes that I have just described. All in all, these rhetorical schemes seem to be designed so as to achieve a bond of trust with the audience, showing an intimate understanding of their position as inexperienced would-be philosophers.[35] The rhetoric of inclusion, as I call it, creates an intimate atmosphere in which the public probably felt itself to be in good hands.

Maximus thus appears to present himself as a helping guide through the field of philosophy. In this respect, his style is somewhat different from that of Epictetus, who addresses his audience more directly in somewhat less polished

33 Scognamillo (1997), 97 notices this, for instance, for the subjunctive θεασώμεθα.

34 Cf. Trapp (1997b), 1953 concerning Maximus' "solicitous concern for clarity and accessibility of exposition."

35 For the notion of trust in ancient rhetorical *praxis*, see the introductory remarks in Yunis (2009).

and embellished language. Epictetus does not shy away from exposing the moral weaknesses of his public, thus alienating himself from their everyday pursuits and beliefs:

> Ἀλλ᾽ εἰς Ὀλυμπίαν μὲν *ἀποδημεῖτε*, ἵν᾽ *ἴδητε* τὸ ἔργον τοῦ Φειδίου, *καὶ* ἀτύχημα ἕκαστος *ὑμῶν* οἴεται τὸ ἀνιστόρητος τούτων ἀποθανεῖν· ὅπου δ᾽ οὐδ᾽ ἀποδημῆσαι χρεία ἔστιν, *ἀλλ᾽* ἔστιν ἤδη *καὶ* πάρεστιν τοῖς ἔργοις, ταῦτα δὲ θεάσασθαι *καὶ κατανοῆσαι οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσετε*; Οὐκ *αἰσθήσεσθε* τοίνυν, οὔτε τίνες *ἐστὲ* οὔτ᾽ ἐπὶ τί *γεγόνατε* οὔτε τί τοῦτό ἐστιν, ἐφ᾽ οὗ τὴν θέαν *παρείληφθε*;—*Ἀλλὰ γίνεταί τινα ἀηδῆ καὶ χαλεπὰ ἐν τῷ βίῳ.—Ἐν Ὀλυμπίᾳ δ᾽ οὐ γίνεται;* Οὐ *καυματίζεσθε*; Οὐ *στενοχωρεῖσθε*; Οὐ *κακῶς λούεσθε*; Οὐ *καταβρέχεσθε*, ὅταν βρέχῃ; Θορύβου δὲ *καὶ* βοῆς *καὶ* τῶν ἄλλων χαλεπῶν *οὐκ ἀπολαύετε*; Ἀλλ᾽ οἶμαι ὅτι ταῦτα πάντα ἀντιτιθέντες πρὸς τὸ ἀξιόλογον τῆς θέας *φέρετε καὶ ἀνέχεσθε*. *Ἄγε* δυνάμεις δ᾽ οὐκ *εἰλήφατε*, καθ᾽ ἃς *οἴσετε* πᾶν τὸ συμβαῖνον; Μεγαλοψυχίαν οὐκ *εἰλήφατε*; Ἀνδρείαν οὐκ *εἰλήφατε*; Καρτερίαν οὐκ *εἰλήφατε*; Καὶ τί ἔτι *μοι* μέλει μεγαλοψύχῳ ὄντι τῶν ἀποβῆναι δυναμένων; Τί *μ᾽ ἐκστήσει* ἢ ταράξει ἢ τί ὀδυνηρὸν φανεῖται; Οὐ *χρήσομαι* τῇ δυνάμει πρὸς ἃ εἴληφα αὐτήν, *ἀλλ᾽* ἐπὶ τοῖς ἀποβαίνουσιν *πενθήσω καὶ στενάξω*;

> But you travel to Olympia to behold the work of Pheidias, and each of you regards it as a misfortune to die without seeing such sights; yet when there is no need to travel at all, but where Zeus is already, and is present in his works, will you not yearn to behold these works and know them? Will you decline, therefore, to perceive either who you are, or for what you have been born, or what that purpose is for which you have received sight?—But some unpleasant and hard things happen in life.—And do they not happen at Olympia? Do you not swelter? Are you not cramped and crowded? Do you not bathe with discomfort? Are you not drenched whenever it rains? Do you not have your fill of tumult and shouting and other annoyances? But I fancy that you hear and endure all this by balancing it off against the memorable character of the spectacle. Come, have you not received faculties that enable you to bear whatever happens? Have you not received magnanimity? Have you not received courage? Have you not received endurance? And what care I longer for anything that may happen, if I be magnanimous? What shall perturb me, or trouble me, or seem grievous to me? Shall I fail to use my faculty to that end for which I have received it, but grieve and lament over events that occur?
>
> EPICT. 1.6.23–29; transl.: W.A. OLDFATHER

The public is here addressed in the second person plural, which sets the speaker apart from his listeners. Epictetus thus emphasizes that the vices of which he accuses the others do not pertain to him. Moreover, he also impersonates a silly thought from someone in the public, after which he promptly refutes the latter's imaginary remark. As in Maximus, there is also a relatively large number of questions, some of which have a clear parallel structure, but these questions are not simply engaging the audience in Epictetus' reasoning—as is the case in Maximus—but they are part of a continuous strategy to make the public aware of their improper behaviour. Like a boxer, Epictetus exposes the weaknesses of human beings, pouncing time and again on his listeners' sensitive spots in order to awaken their conscience. At the end of the fragment, Epictetus uses the first person singular to show the correct way to respond to futile pursuits. Epictetus thus separates himself from his audience in order to function as an example of proper reasoning as opposed to the vices of the common run, among which he counts his own audience.

Nowhere in Maximus' *dialexeis* is the public attacked in such a vehement and hostile fashion.[36] There is obviously some room for polemical discussions in Maximus' orations, but in such cases Maximus generally creates for himself an impersonated opponent with whom the public does not necessarily need to side.[37]

> Ἀλλὰ Σωκράτης εἰς Πειραιᾶ κατῄει προσευξόμενος τῇ θεῷ, καὶ τοὺς ἄλλους προετρέπετο, καὶ ἦν ὁ βίος Σωκράτει μεστὸς εὐχῆς. Καὶ γὰρ Πυθαγόρας ηὔξατο, καὶ Πλάτων, καὶ ὅστις ἄλλος θεοῖς προσήγορος· ἀλλὰ *σὺ μὲν* ἡγεῖ τὴν τοῦ φιλοσόφου εὐχὴν αἴτησιν εἶναι τῶν οὐ παρόντων, *ἐγὼ δὲ* ὁμιλίαν καὶ διάλεκτον πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς περὶ τῶν παρόντων, καὶ ἐπίδειξιν τῆς ἀρετῆς.
>
> But Socrates, you object, went down to the Piraeus to pray to the god and encouraged others to do the same, and his life was full of prayer. Yes, indeed; and what is more Pythagoras prayed and so did Plato, and all others who were granted the privilege of conversing with the gods. But

36 Cf. Puiggali (1983), 61 n. 2: "La diatribe cynico-stoicienne (…) a influencé Maxime, c'est indéniable. Mais notre auteur l'a singulièrement édulcorée. Il rejette tout ce que, dans le Cynisme, pouvait choquer un public délicat. Il affadit la diatribe pour l'adapter au goût d'un auditoire mondain."

37 This rhetorical technique, known as *subiectio*, appears to have its origin in the Cynical tradition (see Lausberg (1990), 381–382). It is thus certainly not the case that Maximus stands entirely outside the Cynical tradition of preaching, but the fact remains that his discourse is less biting than that of an Epictetus.

> you believe the philosopher's prayer to be a request for what he does not have, whereas in my opinion it is a conversation or discussion with the gods about what he does have, and a demonstration of his virtue.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 5.8

Note that Maximus' response is only directed to this one imaginary opponent in the second person singular, whose perspective is directly opposed to that of Maximus himself. The members of the public do not necessarily need to feel personally addressed by Maximus' annoyed reply. Moreover, the imaginary intervention has the flair of a pedantic remark of a self-opinionated persona who merely wants to show that he has read Plato and has found that some passages are at odds with Maximus' general argument. The impersonated intervention is thus not likely to have been sympathized with by Maximus' audience. Therefore, despite the polemical tone, the rhetoric of a passage such as this still serves a communicational model in which the public is encouraged to side with the spokesman. This is quite different from the intended response to Epictetus' assault, for in that case, the public *should* feel castigated by the speaker and ashamed of their unphilosophical behaviour (and thus encouraged to do better).

The fact that there are no direct castigations of the public's behaviour in Maximus may already imply that Epictetus' discourses and Maximus' orations are composed with a different communicative strategy in mind. Whereas Epictetus wants to strike his audience deep in their hearts and make them realize that their lives are pointless if not conducted on the basis of philosophical doctrines, Maximus seems to cultivate a more gentle relationship with his public, in which their vices are never explicitly subjected to a merciless assault. Unlike Epictetus, he seems to believe that his gentle instructions are enough to provide his listeners with a philosophical view on the matter at hand. The tone of the *dialexeis* thus confirms that one ought not to throw overboard the social life as one conducted it, but rather add some basic philosophical insight to one's everyday behaviour.[38]

It may not come as a surprise that Epictetus and Maximus appear to have a different view on how pleasurable philosophy can be. For Epictetus, philosophy is *not* a matter of pleasure, but of pain. Philosophy is portrayed as a painful healing of the soul, so that it can become receptive of Stoic wisdom.[39] For

38 As for the philosophical level of Maximus' discussions, Grimaldi (2002), 109–110 defines the tenth *dialexis* as "(…) utile ad un pubblico non del tutto ignaro del precedente platonico, ma curioso di ascoltare una conferenza ben composta e securamenta dotta."

39 See, e.g., Epict. 3.23.30.

Maximus, by contrast, there is no absolute opposition between philosophy and pleasure, as long as the latter serves the interests of the former. In his discussion of the good orator, he makes the following statement:

> Εἰ δὲ καὶ *ἡδονῆς* πρὸς τὴν ἀγωγὴν ταύτην *δεησόμεθα* †καὶ τυράννου†,[40] δότω μοί τις ἡδονήν, οἵαν καὶ ἐπὶ σάλπιγγος ἁρμονίᾳ ἐν μέσοις τοῖς ὁπλίταις τεταγμένης καὶ ἐξορμώσης τὰς ψυχὰς τῷ μέλει· τοιαύτης δέομαι ἡδονῆς λόγου, ἣ φυλάξει μὲν αὐτοῦ τὸ μέγεθος, οὐ προσθήσει δὲ τὴν αἰσχύνην· *τοιαύτης δέομαι ἡδονῆς*, ἣν οὐκ ἀπαξιώσει ἡ ἀρετὴ ὀπαδὸν αὐτῇ γίνεσθαι.
>
> If we are going to need pleasure too to assist this process, give me the kind of pleasure that is roused by the strains of a trumpet, stationed in the midst of an army of hoplites and inspiring their souls with its call. I need the kind of pleasure in an utterance that will preserve its grandeur without the addition of anything shameful; I need the kind of pleasure that Virtue will not refuse to have as her companion.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 25.7

Maximus, generally not a great lover of pleasure (more on that in a later chapter), here seems to leave the door open for a certain pleasurable experience during a speech. Moreover, in his twenty-second oration, philosophy is eventually put forward as the most suitable verbal entertainment in public gatherings. It is not so far-fetched to apply these metapoetic statements to Maximus' own speaking practice. Indeed, the *dialexeis* are stuffed with anecdotes, illustrations, (Homeric) verses, learned allusions, and rhetorical *flosculi*, all of which contribute to a pleasurable listening experience. For a public that probably visited sophistic declamations for their entertaining potential, Maximus' rhetorical discussion of philosophy must have been a welcome alternative to relatively dry school philosophy which banned all forms of public amusement from its agenda.

How is it possible, one may ask, that this 'light' version of philosophizing (at least to a modern eye) could find support within the context of the Roman Empire? The previous chapter of this book already highlighted the diversity of doctrines and viewpoints that were defended as philosophical. People like Dio and Favorinus could apparently enjoy some fame for their rhetorical expositions and yet be regarded by a good deal of people, including themselves, as

40 Just as Trapp in his edition and translation, I do not really see how these two corrupt words fit in with the context and syntax of the sentence.

serious philosophers. Lucian seems to have claimed some intellectual and even philosophical credibility for his satirical works on the basis of his adherence to Cynical philosophy. And Aelius Aristides even went so far as to defend the moral superiority of rhetoric and its full compatibility with the field of philosophy.

Moreover, even if Maximus should not be considered on par with these famous Imperial intellectuals, this makes his accessible appropriation of the field of philosophy no less interesting. If we simply assumed that it was only the greatest thinkers of this era who determined what type of philosophy is valid and what is not, we would be blind to the regulating process of knowledge transmission within a society. As a more modern parallel to these phenomena, I would like to point to Roland Barthes' discussion of Poujadism in his book *Mythologies*.[41] Poujadism, named after the politician Pierre Poujade, was a French right-wing movement of the 1950s that protected the interests of the small entrepreneurs and the lower middle classes. What especially seems to have annoyed Barthes was Poujade's rhetorical trick of discarding the opinion of the left-wing intellectuals (among them Barthes himself) as difficult, sophisticated and not in line with common sense. The fact that Pierre Poujade enjoyed a fairly large popularity can be taken as a proof that people may rather side with a party with which they can identify than with a progressive movement that may hold more well-thought-out and deliberated opinions. In a similar fashion, we can also explain the success of a modern popular philosopher such as Alain de Botton, which may be based on his ability to make philosophy comprehensible, rather than on the depth of his performed philosophical opinions (as is illustrated by the more or less general disregard of his books in specialized philosophical environments).[42]

If we thus believe that Maximus' audience was no group of professional philosophers, we immediately understand why a rhetoric of inclusion is important in convincing an audience to attend one's lectures.

2.5 *The Communicative Tone of the* Dialexeis *b: Maximus the Authoritative Instructor*

To point exclusively to Maximus' position as an accessible insider to the world of his audience would only sketch half of the picture. After all, if the public really came to listen to the *dialexeis* in order to actually learn something, it did not simply suffice to please their senses with rhetorical flourishes. Part

41 Barthes (1957), 96–98.

42 See Lauwers (2013).

of Maximus' credibility as a philosopher depended on the extent to which he could portray himself as a speaker in possession of an abundant knowledge of relevant doctrines, facts and texts. Therefore, as much as Maximus is an accessible insider, he also appears as an authoritative speaker who confidently holds control over the process of knowledge transmission.

The rhetoric of inclusion is thus complemented with a rhetoric of dependency. This means that Maximus not only portrays himself as a member of his audience, but also as someone who emphasizes that the public *needs him* to upgrade their level of philosophical thinking. Maximus' authority self-evidently comes to the surface in his freedom to choose which arguments to use, which examples to give, and which topics to discuss. This authority is inextricably interwoven with the monological form of the *dialexeis*, which can be opposed to the dialectical method, in which both parties contribute to the flow of the argument. The public attending Maximus' speeches was basically forced to accept its own lack of power to control the stream of words emitted by the speaker in front of them. Perhaps they were allowed to choose the topic that Maximus had to treat on the spot—if we assume that Maximus treated his topics *ex tempore*, as some concurrent sophists did—but from then on they just submitted to Maximus' univocal handling of the topic.

Of course, in his monological discussion of the proposed philosophical themes, Maximus was no exception. Many other public speakers, ranging from Polemo of Laodicea to Plutarch, made use of the monological form of their speech to impose a certain reasoning onto their audience. Yet Maximus appears to exploit his intellectual superiority over his audience in quite a self-conscious fashion, deploying certain discursive techniques to emphasize the public's dependence on his person and knowledge for the improvement of their philosophical education. In order to see how Maximus takes his audience by the hand, it is worthwhile to have a look at a couple of passages in which Maximus impersonates a member of his audience and gives a reply that firmly restores his position as an authoritative speaker.

> Τίς οὖν ἐστιν ὁ κυβερνήτης οὗτος, καὶ τίνι φέροντες ἑαυτοὺς ἐπιτρέψομεν; *Μήπω γε τοῦτο, ὦ τάν, ἔρῃ, πρὶν ἂν τοὺς ἄλλους ἴδῃς καὶ ἐξετάσῃς.*
>
> Who then is this helmsman? To whom shall we go and entrust ourselves? Do not ask me yet, sir, until you have seen and examined the others.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 30.2

In a very similar fashion, Maximus encourages an impersonated voice to have a little more patience.

> Ποῖον οὖν ἐστιν τὸ ἐν λόγοις καλόν; φαίη ἄν τις. *Μήπω με, ὦ τάν, ἔρῃ, ὄψει γὰρ αὐτὸς ἐπειδὰν ἰδεῖν δυνηθῇς.*
>
> So what *does* constitute beauty of utterance?, someone might ask. Do not ask that yet, sir; you will see for yourself when you are capable of it.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 25.4

In order for such an argument to work, Maximus needs to rely on two premises, the first being that his public accepts its intellectual incapacity to come up with a decent answer to these philosophical questions themselves, the second being that the public believes that Maximus *has* the wisdom needed to address the question, and also the power to decide when the public is wise enough to be exposed to the eventual answer.

When Maximus tries to explain to his audience how they are to understand the interaction between human foresight and divine providence, he suggests that they keep the following imagery in mind:

> Ἄνθρωποι δὲ εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀφορῶντες, ᾗ θέμις, ὁρῶσιν τὸν τοῦ Διὸς περιλαμπῆ οἶκον, οὐ χρυσοῖς, καθ' Ὅμηρον, κόσμοις καὶ κόροις δᾷδας μετὰ χεῖρας φέρουσιν λαμπόμενον, ἀλλὰ ἡλίῳ καὶ σελήνῃ καὶ τῶν τούτοις συντεταγμένων ἀκμαίῳ πυρὶ καταφεγγόμενον. Στρατὸν ὁρᾷς ἡγεμόνων ἀγαθῶν καὶ θεραπόντων ἀναγκαίων· τοῦτό μοι *φύλαττε* τὸ σύνθημα, καὶ *ὄψει* μὲν τὴν μαντικήν, *συνήσεις* δὲ τὴν ἀρετήν, *γνωριεῖς* δὲ τὴν ἑκατέρου ἐπιμέλειαν καὶ κοινωνίαν.
>
> When human beings in the meanwhile look up to the heavens, in so far as it is permitted, they behold[43] Zeus' radiant palace, not lighted, in Homer's words, by golden ornaments and youths bearing torches in their hands, but illuminated by the most perfect fire of the sun and the moon and their companions in the celestial order. It is an army you behold of good generals and indispensable subordinates. Keep this compact in mind and you will see what prophecy is, understand what Virtue is, and recognize the connection and partnership between the two.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 13.6

Interesting is the use of the imperative φύλαττε alongside the future tense in ὄψει, συνήσεις, and γνωριεῖς; after having indicated how the public should

43 This is the translation of Koniaris' text, who follows Heinsius in (re)constructing a grammatically sound sentence. The original reading, given in Trapp, is ὁρᾶν instead of ὁρῶσιν.

think about human prophecy, Maximus' strongly ordains them to keep his description in mind, and at the same time promises insight, understanding and knowledge to whomever does that. Far from encouraging his audience to come up with a proper way of describing this phenomenon themselves, Maximus takes responsibility for the group and basically offers his own insight as the high-road to philosophical wisdom. The public is thus discursively prepared to receive Maximus' viewpoints as the (only) correct reflections, the repetition of which merely suffices to give a truthful account on philosophical problems such as this. Notice, moreover, how easily Maximus gently refutes a Homeric conception of Zeus' palace and interprets it self-consciously in the light of a more rationalist cosmology.

As I already remarked in my discussion of Maximus' insider position, the *dialexeis* generally reach a high degree of clarity, in which some elements are felt to be repeated redundantly. The avoidance of argumentative obscurity (and philosophical technicality) also serves Maximus' authoritative voice, in that the public receives a clear-cut and unambiguous treatment of the topic at hand, which reinforces their confidence that the speaker in front adequately puts forward the right opinion, which they can believe to be true and henceforth adopt as their own. The speaker's self-confident pose thus discourages them from formulating doubtful critiques or subversive counter-reasonings. An example of this self-asserted discourse can be found in Maximus' tenth speech on knowledge and recollection:

> Σῶμα μὲν βαδιστικὸν *τῇ φύσει*, ψυχὴ δὲ λογιστικὴ *τῇ φύσει*· εἰ δ' ἐστὶν ἀθάνατος, *ὥσπερ ἐστίν*, ἀνάγκη που αὐτῇ τοῦτο ἐξ ἀιδίου ἐνεῖναι, τὰς νοήσεις τε καὶ ἐπιστήμας τῶν πραγμάτων.
>
> Just as the body is naturally constituted to walk, so the soul is naturally constituted to think. If it is immortal (as indeed it is), then surely it follows necessarily that its knowledge and concepts concerning the world should always have been in it.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 10.9

The clear parallellism of the first sentence of this excerpt, with the redundant repetition of the element τῇ φύσει (which may also be repeated for the rhetorical effect of isocoly), provides the audience at once with a very obvious account of the dual nature of Platonic anthropology. Subsequently, Maximus starts a conditional reasoning, in which the immortality of the soul is taken as an element of the protasis. However, as if Maximus seems to realize that the perspicuity of his reasoning may be blurred if the audience is not sure whether the soul

is immortal or not, he adds the short reassurance ὥσπερ ἐστίν, authoritatively stating that the immortality of the soul is simply a premise on which he relies (and his audience is supposed to rely) for an adequate understanding of the subsequent reasoning. Furthermore, the construction ἀνάγκη with infinitive suggests that the apodosis inevitably follows from the previous data. The reasoning as conducted by Maximus is thus presented as cogent, with Maximus' authority, echoing clear Platonic premises, as a firm pledge of its truthfulness. Of course, this mode of expression is not confined to Maximus alone, for many other (Imperial) philosophers make use of such types of (seemingly) logical reasoning to bring home their viewpoints. It is, however, remarkable that we find this type of apodictive discourse in an author who is traditionally regarded as an orator rather than as a philosopher, and who might therefore be associated with persuasion and mental adherence rather than with logical inductions aimed at reaching the truth.

To better assess Maximus' rhetoric of dependency, it may be worthwhile to contrast his authoritative style to an excerpt from Apuleius' *Florida* performed in Carthage. We immediately see a totally different interaction between the speaker and his audience:

> An non multa mihi apud vos adhortamina suppetunt, quod sum vobis nec lare alienus nec pueritia invisitatus nec magistris peregrinus nec secta incognitus nec voce inauditus nec libris inlectus improbatusve? Ita mihi et patria in concilio Africae, *id est vestro*, et *pueritia apud vos* et *magistri vos* et secta, licet Athenis Atticis confirmata, tamen *hic* inchoata est, et vox mea utraque lingua iam *vestris auribus* ante proxumum sexennium probe cognita, quin et libri mei non alia ubique laude carius censentur quam quod *iudicio vestro* comprobantur.
>
> Or do you not find many encouragements in me? For neither am I a stranger to you, nor was my childhood unwitnessed, nor are my masters unknown, nor is my doctrine, nor has my voice remained unheard, nor have my books remained unread or unappreciated. My homeland lies in the district Africa, and that is your district, and my childhood was with you and you were my masters. Here my doctrine has its origins, even though it was strengthened in Athens in the Attic language, and my voice has in both languages already been well-known to your ears for close to six years. And as for my books, they are not more carefully assessed by any praise in the world than when they are appreciated under your judgement.
>
> APUL. *Flor.* 18.14–16

The main difference between Maximus' *dialexeis* and this particular excerpt is that Apuleius addresses his audience as intellectual peers, which fits the intended speech act of the text quite well. After all, he wants to flatter his fellow 'Africans' for their intellectual level and make *them* feel responsible for the elevated level of his speech. He presents himself as a humble speaker who owes his *raison d'être* to the people he presently addresses.

This case shows that not all types of public speech in the Imperial era relied to the same extent on the intellectual precedence of the speaker over his audience. Apuleius' text thus serves as a good counterpart to assess Maximus' rhetorical position as firmly and explicitly authoritative. Unlike Apuleius, whom the context of the performance inspired to establish a rapport between his own intellectual level and that of his audience, Maximus takes his predominance over his public for granted and exploits this in his search for public recognition of his abundant philosophical knowledge. Maximus' listeners, for their part, in order to feel themselves the Tyrian's prime addressees, must have been willing to accept Maximus' superior intellectual scale as a self-evident fact, which indicates that they did probably not consist of experts in the field of philosophy, who would probably not have enjoyed merely being the recipients of Maximus' patronizing discourse.

2.6 *The Communicative Tone of the* Dialexeis *c: Janus Maximus*

Separating Maximus' two communicative stances has proven relevant for the analysis of the way in which each of them contributes to the overall persuasiveness of Maximus' discourse for the model audience that we reconstructed previously. Moreover, these two facets of Maximus' self-presentation, realized within the same rhetorical moment, correspond to two separate discursive goals that the orations have to realize, but which are neither anterior nor posterior to one another. A philosophical speaker of Maximus' kind, in as much as he tries to present himself as an authoritative bearer of philosophical knowledge, could only attract students and listeners if he could prove that *his* philosophical repertoire and performative talent could improve theirs (no wonder that there was an immediate link between a public speaker's honour and the number of students he attracted—and *vice versa*![44]). This basically means that a speaker such as Maximus was at the same time judging and being judged. In order to

44 That a large public was important for the prestige of an orator may be illustrated by the existence of 'clacques', groups of followers who had personal gain in promoting a certain sophist, and who tried to enhance the audience's response to their favourite's speeches. See Korenjak (2000), 124.

bring out the dual nature of this communicative process, it is worthwhile to separate the rhetorical moment of the *dialexeis* once again into two distinctive parts.

In the first constitutive part of Maximus' communication with his public, Maximus proves himself a *member* of his interpretive community.[45] When he addresses his public, he necessarily needs to rely on the preconceived ideas shared between himself and the audience, which are influenced by contemporary conceptions and by the authorities of the past. This implies that he has to adjust his own assumptions to the general conception that exists among his listeners as to what they may expect from a philosopher or an orator. By fulfilling these social demands, Maximus tries to build a bond of trust with his audience, which eventually ought to accept him as a true *pepaideumenos* worthy of introducing them into the world of philosophy. In this respect, Maximus' self-presentation necessarily involves a demonstration of his own knowledge of and reverence for the classical tradition, and it is on this level that the struggle for authority among the intellectuals of the Imperial period takes place. Consequently, given the social situation in which Maximus operates, he does not necessarily have to prove that philosophy and rhetoric, as components of Greek *paideia*, have an authoritative place in his contemporary society—that viewpoint seems to have been generally endorsed—but he does have to prove that *his* interpretation of philosophy is the one for which is audience is looking. In order to do so, Maximus could in all likelihood dwell upon some other assumptions which he shared with his audience, such as the social value of rhetoric, the canon of authorized authors and stories from the Greek past, and the possible ways of reading texts and cultural data, with which the audience was already made familiar through their own basic literary education and through performances by other *pepaideumenoi* which they were likely to have attended as well. Maximus faces, at this stage, the task of advertising his own way of philosophizing without giving a superficial impression of being just a sophistic babbler, boasting about his versatile and omnipresent knowledge, for the latter stance is quite hard to reconcile with the pose of the true philosopher.

45 The concept of an 'interpretive community' is borrowed from and loosely based on Stanley Fish (see Fish (1982)), who goes on to 'demonstrate', not entirely convincingly in my opinion, that readings of texts are entirely institutionally generated and do not arise from texts themselves. For a more balanced view on this matter, see Phelan (1983). Nevertheless, the use of this concept is instructive for this discussion, as it enables us to point to the institutional power that Maximus aims to claim for himself by embodying the knowledge of the field of philosophy (even if we can probably not speak of an official institution in the same vein as is the case with a modern university).

In the second part of Maximus' communication with his audience, he aims to place himself *on top of the hierarchy* in his interpretive community. He exploits the audience's trust and confidence in him, generated by his cultivated self-presentation, in order to claim for himself the authority to offer his 'reading' of ancient texts and culture as a good, natural, and objective representation of the broad field of *paideia*. Maximus' interest is not only in the authoritative past itself, but also in his own position as an authoritative middle man in his society, who can achieve social prestige—and possibly also economical or political power, but that we cannot know for sure—by means of his supreme knowledge. Using the authoritative form of the monological speech, Maximus determines the selection of classical texts and examples to which he chooses to refer, and the way in which his public ought to interpret these texts as authorities of the past in support of his own philosophical instructions. Although Maximus never explicitly claims to be a genuine philosopher, and quite often presents himself as a humble servant of past authorities, he constantly cultivates a subtle form of rhetorical innuendo, which we also encountered in the first *dialexis*, through which he moulds his proper conception of philosophy and philosophical doctrines after his own practice of orating about philosophical topics, thus promoting the impression that he is in fact a teacher who will be able to satisfy the (social and philosophical) desires of his public.[46]

As has already been remarked, these two parts of the rhetorical communication process do not follow each other in chronological order, but continuously overlap and mutually strengthen one another. It appears that, as soon as Maximus takes the stage, his position as an authoritative speaker is *already* part of the interpretative horizon of his audience, but this does not mean that this authoritative stance needs no further strengthening by the speaker's self-presentation. For our present inquiry, however, separating both moments is crucial if we want to grasp how Maximus' authority is, on the one hand, inextricably connected to his position as an authoritative speaker, but, on the other, can never fully been taken for granted and needs constant reaffirmation.

Perhaps this may all seem quite self-evident, yet the consequences are significant. On the one hand, Maximus presents a type of philosophy that can be evaluated by his public and by society at large, so he has to make sure that he does not divert too overtly from the traditional image of a good philosopher. On the other hand, he claims a certain power to mould this traditional

46 The dynamics of self-authorization are discussed more extensively in the subsequent subchapters.

image after his own discursive demands, provided that this appropriation does not raise the audience's suspicion of being the result of cunning sophistry.[47] In a sense, Maximus' freedom to manipulate his representation of the tradition is obviously kept in check by the audience's established knowledge of the tradition. We must not forget that elite Imperial culture was a very bookish culture indeed, with large public and private libraries,[48] notebooks,[49] and public discussions about literature.[50] This had some obvious consequences for the speakers who claimed to embody a certain amount of knowledge. While in primitive cultures, authority exclusively lies in the hands of wise men who communicate their memories to their fellow citizens, Imperial culture did possess objective touchstones to test a person's knowledge of a certain work, author, or fact.[51] In their competition over cultural capital, *pepaideumenoi* based themselves on traditional texts and facts that could potentially be verified by other high-class citizens who had access to the same data as their peers. However, if Maximus' audience primarily consisted of intellectual subordinates (at least as far as philosophy is concerned), his appropriation of traditional material may have encountered less resistance from the public than a modern educated reader would expect.

The extent to which Maximus could stretch his discursive liberty thus depends both upon the audience's knowledge and upon the degree to which they were prepared to trust Maximus' representation.[52] How this subtle interplay

47 Cf. Miles (2000), 36: "Communication (...) is always a two-way process. Power often involves imposing an authorized reading of such texts and images as have been made available. This authorized reading will always be ranged against the power of its receivers to generate new interpretations."

48 A general discussion of libraries in the Imperial era is offered in Casson (2001), esp. 80–123. For the link between libraries, *paideia*, and power, see Neudecker (2004). An important recent contribution to this field is König—Oikonomopoulou—Woolf (eds.) (2013).

49 Obvious examples are the introduction to Aulus Gellius' *Attic nights* and Plutarch of Chaeronea's use of *hypomnêmata*. On the latter, see Van der Stockt (1999).

50 These discussions could be held in various contexts, from oral speech delivery to elite reading communities (see Johnson (2009)) to bookshops (see White (2009)).

51 Cf. Bowman—Woolf (1994), 7: "When texts are available, the power of authors and exegetes to impose an 'authorized' reading is ranged against the power of readers to generate new interpretations."

52 See, for a discussion of this process informed by insights from the field of linguistics, Lauwers—Roskam (2012). In the subchapter investigating the purpose of the *dialexeis*, I will also discuss the fact that the very accessibility and the suitable character of Maximus' philosophy for his *parvenu* audience may have facilitated the acceptance of some rather suspicious modifications of the philosophical repertoire.

with traditional authorities takes place will be further analysed in the following subchapters.

The reduction of Maximus' rhetorical efforts to the first 'moment' of cultivated self-presentation in service of an untouchable authority of past figures and events, which often happened in previous research, remains largely blind to Maximus' personal ambitions and rhetorical efforts. To my mind, this is why most studies on the Tyrian fail to answer the question of what Maximus' personal and social motives could have been for lecturing as he does, and what kind of public response he could have been hoping for. Moreover, such a view underestimates the social relevance of these types of lecturing on philosophical themes, perhaps not for the development of philosophy as a monolithic body of innovative ideas, but for individuals who used the prestige of the field of philosophy for their own self-fashioning. This perspective seems crucial to assess the communicational value of the performance of Maximus' *dialexeis*, which is necessary to lift their historical relevance above the depreciatory label of lowbrow and 'innocent' *divertimento*.

2.7 *Extra: Depersonalizing One's Reason as a Rhetorical Strategy*

As a conclusion to the discussion of Maximus' twofold self-presentation, it is worthwhile to address an interesting rhetorical strategy that enables Maximus to reconcile his authoritative stance with his position as an insider to the world of his audience. This strategy merely consists of the dissimulation of Maximus' own power over his reasoning, as if not *he*, but speech/reason (λόγος) itself is responsible for the viewpoints that are put forward. An example of this procedure is already offered in the long paragraph illustrating Maximus' insider position (see δέος μὴ λάθῃ ἐξαπατήσας ἡμᾶς ὁ λόγος οὗτος), but it occurs fairly frequently at other instances in the *dialexeis* as well, for example in the thirtieth oration, in which Maximus has just compared the human soul to a ship in need of guidance:

> Ἐπεὶ δὲ *ὁ λόγος*, *οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως*, εἰκόνος θαλαττίας ἐπελάβετο, μὴ *ἀφῶμεν αὐτὸν* ἀπελθεῖν *ἡμῖν* πρὶν ἐξεργάσηται σαφῶς τὴν γραφήν, εἰκάζων τὴν Ἐπικούρου φιλοσοφίαν βασιλικῇ ὁλκάδι †Αἰήτου βασιλέως.
>
> Since the argument, I do not know how, has fastened on a nautical metaphor,[53] let us not allow it to leave us without working out the image in

53 Trapp (1997a), 246–247 gives for this sentence "Since somehow or another our line of argument has fastened on a nautical metaphor", which is fine *ad sensum*, but goes a little further away from the text than my own translation.

> detail, by comparing the philosophy of Epicurus with the royal barge of king †Aeetes.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 30.3

Maximus does not simply take credit for the further development of his argument, but separates the λόγος from his own subjective opinion. He even goes so far as to state that he does not comprehend how the λόγος has come up with the nautical metaphor in the first place (cf. οὐκ οἶδ' ὅπως), as if he himself is submitted to the 'logical' steps of the (read: his) reasoning.

Quite interestingly, this rhetorical strategy serves Maximus' self-presentation as an insider as well as his authoritative stance. On the one hand, the depersonalization of his speech and opinion enables Maximus to place himself on the receiving end of the communicational scheme, which makes it possible to identify himself with his audience, who are also receiving concrete instruction. Hence it is possible for Maximus to speak of his public and himself as 'us' (cf. ἀφῶμεν and ἡμῖν) again, which strengthens his rhetoric of inclusion. If Maximus were to proclaim that he is the one to have introduced the nautical metaphor, this very assertion would isolate him from the public and render the process of identification more difficult.

On the other hand, the appearance of the λόγος as the nexus of authority objectifies Maximus' opinion to such an extent that it appears to surmount his subjective individuality. This creates the impression that the reasoning is not conducted according to the fortuitous mental gymnastics of the speaker, but that it is grounded in an objective type of reasoning that follows an indisputable sense of truth. Maximus thus presents himself as someone relying on an objectified reasoning and translating its self-evident viewpoints to his audience, a process during which the truthfulness of the reasoning is naturalized and authorized.[54]

This case shows that some representations in the *dialexeis* do not necessarily spring from Maximus' naive belief that he is not capable of thinking for himself and has merely submitted himself to his own capricious associations or to the powerful tradition, but may equally well be part of an amalgam of rhetorical strategies designed so as to bestow a flair of self-evident authority on the speaker.

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54 Cf. Arweiler (2010): "[The] success [of constatives] as privileged speech acts in academic discourse (and many other areas of communication) is based on their seemingly direct relation to facts, which in turn is based on the hearer's recognition of expressive and affective elements, namely reliability and belief."

3 Sophistry

The next three subchapters deal with the representation of the fields of sophistry, rhetoric, and philosophy in Maximus' *dialexeis*. It will be shown how, on the one hand, these representations are in many respects in line with Imperial culture, which we analysed in the previous chapter; yet, on the other hand, Maximus' specific position as a Platonizing philosopher, a public speaker, and an accessible but also authoritative instructor forces him, so to speak, to find his own position within and between the great authorities of the past and the discursive voices of his contemporaries. Some figures are cited with great authority, while others do not appear to have made the cut. In this context, what Maximus mentions in his orations is sometimes equally interesting as what he *does not* mention, as it reveals his strategic process of selection in service of his discursive self-positioning.[55]

The first discussion is devoted to the field of sophistry, as this clearly illustrates how Maximus' status as either a sophist or a *Halbphilosoph*, which has been attributed to him by modern scholarship, does not correspond with his own self-conception and self-representation. In order to reinforce this claim, we will examine how sophistry and the representatives of the first sophistic movement are depicted by Maximus. Subsequently, however, we can speculate upon the possibility that, despite his assertions of definitely *not* being a sophist, he could have been regarded as such by his contemporaries, just like Dio Chrysostom or Favorinus were labelled as sophists by Philostratus without actually depicting *themselves* as such in their public performances.

It should not surprise that this subchapter is shorter than the next two, given that Maximus' dealing with rhetoric is more complicated than his blunt rejection of sophistry, and that his adoption of the philosophical repertoire is so ubiquitous that it self-evidently calls for a more elaborate treatment.

3.1 *Maximus as an Anti-Sophist*

On the basis of the modern attribute of *Halbphilosoph*, we would expect Maximus to adopt a position in between the two discourses of his time, viz. that which despises sophists as 'bad' would-be philosophers, and that which honours sophists for their amazing rhetorical skill. However, as is the case in many

55 Cf. Dillon—Long (1988), 13: "Every culture is both selectic and synthetic in its approach to the tradition it acknowledges as its own; and the fact of acknowledgement itself involves the promotion of this or that idea or thinker and the demotion of other parts of the tradition." I would add that this process of selection and demotion starts with individuals who ultimately add up to the 'culture' referred to here.

concurrent intellectuals, quite the opposite is true, for Maximus exclusively presents himself as an ardent follower of the discursive norms of his contemporary philosophers.[56] In his speeches, Maximus uses the word sophist in a consistently negative fashion, as a label for perverters of the truth, quarrelling philosophers, deviant imitators of a philosopher, and so on.[57]

We already came across a passage in Maximus' programmatic first oration, in which he argued that rich appearances and beautiful dresses are not incompatible with philosophy. Implicit in this passage is the idea that the grand display of wealth, which seems to have been characteristic of many sophistic performances of the Imperial era, does not necessarily make one a sophist. If the consequences of these apologetic assertions also pertain to Maximus' own situation as a philosophical speaker—and, as already argued, such an interpretation is quite valid!—they reveal that Maximus' aim was to set himself apart from the mere sophists *despite* the apparent similarities between his philosophical performances and their verbal displays. We already encountered a similar philosophical self-positioning in Dio Chrysostom's *Olympian discourse*, where the speaker uttered his surprise at his own popularity at the expense of the mere sophistic performers who were declaiming at the same time.

In his twenty-fifth oration, Maximus shows his contempt for the sophistic practices of his day:

> Εἰ δ' ἔστιν μαντείαν ἐπὶ ψυχῇ θέσθαι οὐ διὰ ἀμυδρῶν οὐδὲ ἀσθενῶν συμβόλων, τοῖς μὲν ὀφθαλμοῖς παραχωρητέον τὴν χρωμάτων τε καὶ σχημάτων καὶ τῆς ἐν τούτοις ἡδονῆς καὶ ἀηδίας ὁμιλίαν, *τῇ δὲ ἀκοῇ ἐξιχνευτέον τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ἦθος*, οὐ κατὰ τοὺς τῶν πολλῶν λογισμούς, ⟨οἷς⟩ ἀπόχρη πρὸς ἔπαινον λόγου *γλῶττα εὔστοχος, ἢ ὀνομάτων δρόμος, ἢ ῥήματα Ἀττικά, ἢ περίοδοι εὐκαμπεῖς, ἢ ἁρμονία ὑγρά*.
>
> If there is a possibility of establishing a form of divination for the soul that does not depend on such obscure and feeble indications, then we must leave the eyes to deal in colours and shapes and the pleasure and

56 Cf. the more or less same conclusion, but on different grounds, in Meiser (1909), 26: "Alle Stoffe, die er [= Maximos] behandelt, sind philosophischer Art, nur die Behandlungsweise ist rhetorisch. Er ist in erster Linie Philosoph, dann Rhetor."

57 See Max. *Or.* 3.3; 14.8; 15.6; 17.1 (2×); 18.4 (2×); 18.6; 18.9; 20.3 (2×); 21.4; 26.2 (2×); 27.8; 30.1; 31.1. In Max. *Or.* 18.9, a sophist is used twice in a more or less neutral fashion, once when love is called a sophist (a clear reminiscence of Pl. *Smp.* 203de), and a second time as a fairly neutral attribute for Anacreon, the sophist of Teios (note that the label sophist receives its negative philosophical meaning primarily after Anacreon's time).

> displeasure that they bring, and use the sense of hearing instead to track down the character of the soul. We should not, however, follow the reasoning of the masses, for whom sufficient grounds to praise an utterance are furnished by a *sharp*[58] tongue, and a rush of words, and Attic diction, and well-constructed periods, and elegant composition.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 25.3

Maximus demands that speech be an indication of one's character, but not in the superficial way in which the masses tend to evaluate speech, viz. on the basis of mere rhetorical flourishes. This passage functions within Maximus' general strategy to urge his public to look beyond the superficial appearance of speeches delivered by verbal artists, and pay attention to the usefulness of a speech for one's life. Throughout the entire twenty-fifth speech, Maximus strongly suggests that his own mode of speaking be distinguished from that of the sophists of his age, precisely because he claims to add philosophical truthfulness to his speeches and to raise his audience's moral standards, unlike other public performers.[59] As may already be clear, the contempt for the masses displayed here can easily be opposed to the so-called sophists' blind search for public praise and acclaim.

Even when Maximus is arguing against a persona that he himself adopted in the previous oration, he does not hesitate to label his imaginary opponent as a sophist. In the thirty-second oration, Maximus speaks from the perspective of an Epicurean, thereby arguing against standpoints that he quite consistently defends in the rest of his oeuvre:

> Φαῦλόν τι χρῆμα ἡδονή; Οὐκ ἂν ἦν ξύμφυτον, οὐδὲ τῶν σωζόντων ἡμᾶς τὸ πρεσβύτατον. Τὰ δὲ *ὑπὸ τῶν σοφιστῶν* θρυλούμενα ἐς αὐτήν, ἡ Σαρδαναπάλλου τρυφή, καὶ ἡ Μηδικὴ χλιδή, καὶ ἡ Ἰωνικὴ ἁβρότης, καὶ τράπεζαι Σικελικαί, καὶ ὀρχήσεις Συβαριτικαί, καὶ ἑταῖραι Κορίνθιαι, ταῦτα ἀθρόα, καὶ ὅσα τούτων ποικιλώτερα, οὐχ ἡδονῆς ἔργα, ἀλλὰ τέχνης καὶ λόγου, παρανομησάντων τῶν ἀνθρώπων εἰς ἡδονὰς δι' εὐπορίαν τῶν τέχνων ὀψὲ τοῦ χρόνου.
>
> Is Pleasure really worthless? In that case, it would not come naturally, nor be the most venerable of all the forces that promote our survival. As for the well-worn reproaches that sophists bring against it, Sardanapallus' luxury,

58 I here modified Trapp's translation of 'fluid', which in turn corresponds to Trapp's reading of εὔτροχος (Markland) instead of εὔστοχος (R). To my knowledge, there are no cogent reasons to emend R's reading.

59 For a more extensive analysis of this speech, see Lauwers (2012).

> and the extravagance of the Medes, and Ionian decadence, and Sicilian gourmandizing, and Sybaritic dances and Corinthian courtesans, all this, and anything yet more elaborate, is not the work of Pleasure, but of artifice and calculation, as men have used their recently acquired abundance of technical resources to break Pleasure's laws.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 32.3

The passage illustrates that Maximus, embarking on an Epicurean division between natural and unnatural pleasures and taking up a strong anti-Stoic stance in accusing the *logos* of unnatural pleasure seeking, fully engages in a philosophical discourse that aims to downplay philosophical adversaries as mere sophists. Furthermore, the fact that he uses this strategy even against his own philosophical personae shows that he is willing to devote himself entirely to the case which he is pleading at that particular moment, not only while defending his own performed opinion, but also while refuting arguments that could be put forward against his present position.

In describing Maximus' efforts to position himself discursively within the philosophical system rather than the popular-sophistic system, a tendency which we have also demonstrated in many other intellectuals of his day, we may observe a facet of philosophy which might otherwise remain un(der)exposed, viz. its power to provide a speaker with a self-evident authority before an audience that is in search for what they believe to be philosophical education and distinction. Only if we accept this to be a facet of philosophy as well, can we come closer to the actual working of the notion of philosophy in Maximus' popularizing speeches.

3.2 *Members of the First Sophistic Movement*

Direct references to the second sophistic movement do not exist in Maximus, which should not surprise us altogether, given that he only refers to a historical framework that predates the death of Alexander the Great. For this reason, we can only examine the places where he mentions the representatives of the *first* sophistic movement.

The first sophists receive only little attention from the Tyrian, and even if they do, it is in a very brief and offhand manner. Each sophist is associated with one or two aspects of his sophistry: Gorgias with his rhetoric,[60] Prodicus with his famous story about Hercules[61] and his terminological distinc-

60 Max. *Or.* 17.1.

61 Max. *Or.* 14.1; 25.7.

tions,[62] Protagoras with his relativism of truth,[63] Hippias with his *genealogia*,[64] and Thrasymachus with his injustice.[65] Many of the references are actually clustered at the beginning of the seventeenth oration, which starts off with the description of a Syracusean cook Mithaecus, who is labelled by Maximus as a sophist, after which the other traditional sophists are swiftly mentioned to illustrate that Mithaecus' sophistry is of a specific kind. This type of concise clustering is quite a common tendency in Maximus, where one reference to a certain figure, school, or practice tends to trigger quite a similar one, and so on. Moreover, the quick association of a figure with the most salient aspect of his thinking or life is quite similar to an overall Maximean technique that pertains to philosophers, historical figures, and fictitious characters as well.[66]

Given the exemplarity of Socrates and the author Plato in Maximus' writings, it is not hard to determine why the members of the first sophistic movement, who were generally depicted as the main intellectual adversaries of (Plato's) Socrates,[67] do not figure so prominently. Yet—and this is also quite relevant—in contrast to the great rhetoricians from the classical period, they are not entirely absent from Maximus' discourse either. Ironically enough, what has been responsible for their negative name in philosophical discourse such as Maximus's, viz. their role in Plato's dialogues, has probably also been the prime reason for their *inclusion* in Maximus' philosophical repertoire, albeit not so much for their nuanced ideas as for a quick allusion to their mere existence.[68]

To give but one example: Gorgias, who is associated by Maximus with his rhetoric, does not receive commendation for his playful response to Parmenides' ontological theory in positing that nothing exists in his work *On the non-existent*, while this very essay is Sextus Empiricus' main motivation for including Gorgias' name and ideas in *his* epistemological discussion.[69] Furthermore, although Plato's *Gorgias* contains many ideas that are potentially interesting for a philosophical orator such as Maximus, Gorgias' ideas about rhetoric and Socrates' refutations of them never become an explicit point of reference in the Tyrian's orations. All in all, the fact that Gorgias' name is not linked to his

62 Max. *Or.* 17.1.
63 Max. *Or.* 11.5.
64 Max. *Or.* 17.1.
65 Max. *Or.* 17.1.
66 The origin and the purpose of this technique will be discussed below (6c).
67 See Max. *Or.* 18.9.
68 Note that Philostratus describes the first (not the second!) sophistic movement as being concerned with philosophical problems. See Phil. *VS.* 480.
69 See S.E. *PH* 2.59 and 2.64, and *M* 7.48, 7.65, and 7.77.

reasonings, not even to those in Plato's famous dialogue, testifies to Maximus' relative reluctance to grant him (and, by extension, all of the sophists) full credit for his role in the history of philosophy. Yet, as we will see, judged by these standards, there are only few, even among the 'real' philosophers, whose role in the *dialexeis* exceeds the level of mere namedropping.

3.3 *Maximus through the Eyes of Philostratus? Some Tentative Suggestions*

Maximus' self-representation as an anti-sophist can quite confidently be interpreted as an attempt to distinguish himself from the popular-sophistic system, in which the title of sophist is associated with honour, fame, and dazzling verbal skills. With this strategy, he follows a tendency that can be observed in a large number of Imperial intellectuals, who cultivate a philosophical aura to set themselves apart from the mere imposters, whom they label with contempt as sophists.

However, in some of those who oppose themselves to sophistry, such as Favorinus, Aelius Aristides, and Dio Chrysostom, we observe some features that link these people to the sophistic dynamics of their era. While they themselves aim to emphasize their intellectual superiority over their less philosophical fellow competitors on the market of public speech delivery, their contemporary reception and the laudatory discussion of their lives in Philostratus' biographies point to the fact that, within a more popular context, they were likely to be regarded as 'good' and successful sophists. In other words, an evaluation of these figures did not solely occur on the basis of the discursive framework which they themselves installed, but also on the basis of the discursive background of their audience, either concurrent—as in our epigraphical sources—or posthumous—as in Philostratus. It is probably this discursive discrepancy that has inspired modern scholars to label Favorinus and Dio as *Halbphilosophen*, but we must bear in mind that such a label seems to imply that they are *only* half-philosophers in comparison to a Plutarch or an Epictetus, while Philostratus himself appears to imply that these philosophers were gifted with an extraordinary talent for rhetorical exposition, which does not mean that they were any less philosophic than the less verbose ones.[70] In other words, people who label Dio and Favorinus as *Halbphilosophen* neither start from these intellectuals' own self-presentation nor from Philostratus' value scale, but rather express their own (modern) estimation of proper philosophy as being distinct from the more wordy paradigms for which these intellectuals stood.

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70 See my analysis in Lauwers (2013), 340–345.

This being said, it is worthwhile to consider how contemporary audiences would have looked at Maximus' case, and it appears that Philostratus provides us with a unique insight into this more 'popular' value scale of the Imperial era. Unfortunately, Maximus has not been mentioned in Philostratus' overview, but this tells us relatively little about either his success or his status as a sophist or a philosopher, given that influential and verbally gifted intellectuals such as Lucian, Plutarch, and Epictetus have been left out of Philostratus' work as well.

Perhaps the most instructive passage in Philostratus for our present discussion is when he sets the ancient sophistic method apart from the philosophical one:

> Τὴν ἀρχαίαν σοφιστικὴν ῥητορικὴν ἡγεῖσθαι χρὴ φιλοσοφίαν· διαλέγεται μὲν γὰρ ὑπὲρ ὧν οἱ φιλοσοφοῦντες, ἃ δὲ ἐκεῖνοι τὰς ἐρωτήσεις ὑποκαθήμενοι καὶ τὰ σμικρὰ τῶν ζητουμένων προβιβάζοντες οὔπω φασὶ γιγνώσκειν, *ταῦτα ὁ παλαιὸς σοφιστὴς ὡς εἰδὼς λέγει*. Προοίμια γοῦν ποιεῖται τῶν λόγων τὸ "οἶδα" καὶ τὸ "γιγνώσκω" καὶ "πάλαι διέσκεμμαι" καὶ "βέβαιον ἀνθρώπῳ οὐδέν." Ἡ δὲ τοιαύτη ἰδέα τῶν προοιμίων εὐγένειάν τε προηχεῖ τῶν λόγων καὶ φρόνημα καὶ *κατάληψιν σαφῆ τοῦ ὄντος*. Ἥρμοσται δὲ ἡ μὲν τῇ ἀνθρωπίνῃ μαντικῇ, ἣν Αἰγύπτιοί τε καὶ Χαλδαῖοι καὶ πρὸ τούτων Ἰνδοὶ ξυνέθεσαν, μυρίοις ἀστέρων στοχαζόμενοι τοῦ ὄντος, ἡ δὲ τῇ θεσπιῳδῷ τε καὶ χρηστηριώδει.
>
> We must regard ancient sophistic art as philosophical rhetoric. For it discusses the themes that philosophers treat of, but whereas they, by their method of questioning, set snares for knowledge, and advance step by step as they confirm the minor points of their investigations, but assert that they have still no sure knowledge, the sophist of the old school assumes a knowledge of that whereof he speaks. At any rate, he introduces his speeches with such phrases as "I know," or "I am aware," or "I have long observed," or "For mankind there is nothing fixed and sure." This kind of introduction gives a tone of nobility and self-confidence to a speech and implies a clear grasp of the truth. The method of the philosophers resembles the prophetic art which is controlled by man and was organized by the Egyptians and Chaldeans and, before them, by the Indians, who used to conjecture the truth by the aid of countless stars; the sophistic method resembles the prophetic art of soothsayers and oracles.
>
> PHIL. *VS*. 480–481; transl.: W.C. WRIGHT

Quite tellingly, Philostratus appears to associate the field of philosophy primarily with its zetetic character, in that the careful and uncertain search for the truth is here established as the typical characteristic of philosophical inquiry.

It is fairly remarkable that Philostratus tends to associate philosophy with the aporetic aspect of (Socrates') philosophy and thus with its Sceptical rather than its doctrinal branch (notice also the application of the technical term κατάληψις to the field of sophistry, while it is usually a matter of dispute between the Sceptics and the Stoics; notice, moreover, that Maximus, in contrast to Philostratus, makes no single mention of this technical term!). Sophistry is then to be associated with assertive and authoritative claims in which the speaker presents his knowledge as a firm and stable point of orientation. Modern readers may be tempted to interpret this statement as if Philostratus grants higher authority to the field of philosophy, but the text offers no ground for such an interpretation. Sophistry is here presented as a legitimate alternative road to knowledge, and is even likened to the authoritative art of soothsayers and oracles.

It is dangerous to simply transpose this conceptual difference between the two fields to the opposition between the Second Sophistic and its contemporary field of philosophy, given that the opposition between Sceptical and doctrinal tendencies in philosophical thinking is only brought to a head after the classical period. A firm doctrinal framework such as that of Alcinoüs' *Handbook of Platonism* does offer very concrete and assertive doctrinal instructions to its reader, but it seems hard to imagine that Philostratus thought of this handbook as sophistic. However, the differences between Alcinoüs and Maximus are quite notable, and it is hard to deny that Maximus' texts, clearly designed for rhetorical display, bear more resemblance to the sophistic tendencies described in Philostratus' *Lives of the sophists* than to Alcinoüs' handbook. Moreover, if even a self-conscious Sceptic such as Favorinus was included in Philostratus' overview of philosophical sophists, what then to say of an authoritative doctrinal performer such as Maximus? For these reasons, if we allow ourselves some frankness, the fact that Philostratus associates with sophistry a type of self-confident expression of wisdom, combined with the obvious display of verbal splendour, is fairly likely that he would have considered Maximus, had he mentioned him, a philosopher *and* a sophist, in the same vein as Dio and Favorinus. After all, in the previous subchapter, we established that Maximus does not shy away from positioning himself discursively as an authoritative communicator of the truth. In line with his theatrical metaphor in the first oration, he appears to fully embrace his role as subject-presumed-to-know, a role bestowed upon him as a result of the performative situation in which he happens to find himself.[71]

71 See Goffman (1981), 162–196.

Illustrative for Maximus' firm and self-confident grip on the material with which he presents his audience is the fact that Thomas Schmitz, in his discussion of Maximus' work, has labeled the *dialexeis* as authoritarian texts, a term which he borrowed from Suleiman's discussion of the *roman à thèse*.[72] There is, however, at least one important difference between the *roman à thèse* and Maximus' *dialexeis*, the consequences of which are not fully pursued in Schmitz' study. Both types of literature present a functional representation of reality that forces their receivers into accepting a certain ideological framework, but unlike the writers of the *romans à thèse*, who try to naturalize the ideological framework and seem to want to 'disappear' as a mediating instrument between the plot of the novel and the reader, Maximus remains present in the communication with his audience, not just physically, but also as an intervening force on which the audience needs to rely for an adequate understanding of the philosophy which is presented. There is a strong 'I' in the *dialexeis*, through which Maximus displays deliberate opinions and frequently reminds his audience that they depend on his expertise when interpreting the Greek philosophical tradition. The (in itself already emphatic) nominative ἐγώ and the more emphatic forms ἐγώγ' and ἐγώγε occur in the *dialexeis* no less than 59 times with specific reference to the speaker himself, often in combination with a *verbum putandi* or *dicendi*, which indicates that Maximus does not refrain from taking a personal stance in the debates which he presents to his audience.[73] This conclusion stands counter to earlier portraits of the Tyrian, which have merely reduced his personality to a humble servant of the Greek tradition.

This hypothetical Philostratean reception of Maximus is bound to get stuck at the level of mere speculation, yet it is important to keep our minds open to the possibility that Maximus, despite his own assertions of being no sophist at all, was still regarded by (part of) his audience as a sophistic performer. Indeed, the *dialexeis* lend themselves to a reception based on both the subject-matter—which is rather philosophical—and the form—which leans towards sophistry—and, as we will see in our discussion of rhetoric in the *dialex-*

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72 See Schmitz (1997), 220–225, and Suleiman (1983).

73 In four cases, the nominative ἐγώ occurs in a citation from Homer and does not refer to Maximus himself (*Or.* 5.5; 13.8; 18.5; 38.7). In a more complex case, Maximus' impersonation of Anaxagoras in the sixteenth speech (paragraphs 2 and 3) refers to himself three times with the nominative ἐγώ. Although one could say that in the latter case, there is an interesting overlap between the persona of the impersonator and the impersonated Anaxagoras, I have left all these references out of the eventual number.

eis, such a double reception can, in light of Maximus' own paradigm of philosophy, even coexist in one and the same listener. Even though Maximus would never subscribe to the opinion that he displays some notable similarities to a number of sophistic performers of his day, why could a member of the audience not be attracted to Maximus' philosophical paradigm *as a result of* its entertaining theatricality and its recognizable sophistic verbosity?

4 Rhetoric

While sophistry is within philosophical discourse quite univocally abjured, rhetoric seems to occupy a more complicated position. Plato did not think of it as an art, but Aristotle described the dynamics of persuasion quite extensively, thus putting rhetoric on the philosophical agenda. The Imperial period witnessed its own appropriations of the fields of rhetoric and philosophy, as Aelius Aristides argued for the integration of rhetoric in philosophical thinking, and Favorinus defended the pursuit of rhetorical splendour on the basis of its contribution to the Academic ideal of a prolonged suspension of judgement and on the basis of its being part of a common-sense conformation to everyday life. For a philosophical orator like Maximus, it could be expected that he takes up this thread and gives a lot of attention to it; yet, remarkably, we find only a few explicit references to the field of rhetoric and its relation to philosophy. By examining Plato's influence on Maximus' thoughts and the lack of reference to ancient rhetoricians in the *dialexeis*, we shall try to explain why Maximus' treatment of rhetoric remains largely associated in a negative fashion with the field of sophistry, and why rhetoric bears, on the level of explicit content, no authority in Maximus' work. Subsequently, however, it will be demonstrated how Maximus' own philosophical paradigm paves the way for a conceptual incorporation of rhetorical skill in the pursuit of philosophy. After that, we will discuss the relation between truth and persuasion and the role of the *dissoi logoi* in Maximus' work, with some particular attention to the question whether Maximus can be seen as a Sceptic. Finally, there is a study of a typical phenomenon in Maximus' *dialexeis*, viz. the use of forensic tropes.

4.1 *Maximus' Contempt for Democracy*

As already highlighted, in his condemnation of sophistic rhetoric, Maximus proves himself an ardent follower of traditional philosophical discourse. Moreover, in other domains of public speech and life, he equally consistently sides

with his philosophical forbearers, most notably with Plato. Despite Maximus' great admiration for a great Athenian statesman like Pericles, the Athenian democracy, which was the playground of the canonized group of brilliant practitioners of the art of rhetoric, is not held in high esteem.[74] Besides being turned down in favour of aristocracy,[75] it is associated with flattery,[76] illness,[77] and chaotic polyphony.[78] It is even described as a euphemistic name for *ochlokratia*,[79] and is portrayed as the opposite of the product of the divine laws.[80] It is also likened to a human soul which suffers from an unbalanced thinking process, and which has to be avoided at any price.[81] Furthermore, when Maximus compares the human soul to a state, the *dêmos*, with its unstable and polymorphous character, is portrayed, along with Plato's imagery,[82] as the subordinate of philosophy itself:

> Ὁ δὲ ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ δῆμος πολὺς καὶ ἔμπληκτος· ἀλλ' ἐπειδὰν ἅπαξ εἴξας ὁμολογήσῃ τῷ νόμῳ, καὶ ἕπηται ᾗ αὐτὸς ἐπικελεύῃ τοῦτο ἂν εἴη τὸ χρῆμα πολιτεία ψυχῆς ἡ ἀρίστη, ἣν καλοῦσιν ἄνθρωποι φιλοσοφίαν.
>
> The population of the human soul is large and impulsive; but when once it gives way and accepts the law and follows where it commands, then the result is that best of all constitutions for the soul, which men call Philosophy.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 37.2

The opinion put forward here (as well as in Imperial political thought in general) seems to be that in order for a society to function well, the inferior people must subordinate themselves to the law. The *dêmos* is thus regarded as a blind force that must not be made the cornerstone of the political structures, but must be stabilized and controlled through obedience to higher institutions. Moreover, through the cunning comparison between body and society, it is

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74 In his rejection of democracy, Maximus is certainly no solitary case. Cf. the case of Plutarch, discussed earlier in this study.

75 Max. *Or.* 14.7; 16.4.

76 Max. *Or.* 3.7; 14.7.

77 Max. *Or.* 7.2.

78 Max. *Or.* 11.10.

79 Max. *Or.* 16.4.

80 Max. *Or.* 6.5.

81 Max. *Or.* 16.5.

82 Trapp (1997a), 292 n. 8 identifies the imagery as that of Plato's *Republic*.

suggested that a citizen's task is also to suppress the '*dêmos*' in his own individual constitution. It is remarkable yet elegant how smoothly Maximus shifts his attention from the social component of philosophy to individual ethics, and back again.

Only once does the term democracy occur as a desirable form of government,[83] but this occurrence is in itself not unproblematic. For Maximus inserts this appreciation in his oration *Whether agriculture is preferable to warfare*, where democracy is sketched as the most peaceful constitution. Since Maximus also composed a defence of the soldier's life, it can be doubted if this particular argument about democracy corresponds to Maximus' actual opinion. The consistently negative appreciation of democracy in the rest of the *dialexeis*, in any case, gives rise to the suggestion it does not correspond. Furthermore, Maximus' only argument in his defence of democracy is that it is more peaceful than oligarchy and tyranny, which is why the latter two forms of government are hated by peasants. All in all, this passage exudes rather weak argumentative power in favour of democracy when compared with the strong negative attributes of democracy in the remainder of the *dialexeis*. The *locus* under consideration here therefore seems a rhetorical manipulation of a speaker who attributes more value to the development of a convincing argumentation about the particular case he defends at that specific moment than to his own personal ideas and assumptions.

Apart from testifying to the distinctive and anti-democratic character of Maximus' discourse, the negative connotation of the concept of democracy in the *dialexeis* also indicates that Maximus consistently follows Plato's disapproval of the social institutions of classical Athens (which, after all, put Maximus' beloved Socrates to death). In his choice *for* Plato and *against* the Athenian democratic institutions, we can already witness Maximus' focus on rhetoric's excesses and pitfalls, rather than its inherent merits.

4.2 (*The Absence of*) *Rhetoricians in Maximus*

In the light of Maximus' contempt for democracy, he almost entirely neglects one of its greatest defenders, Demosthenes.[84] Similarly, other great public speakers who thanked their political career in Athens to the verbal talent are strikingly absent from the *dialexeis*. Admittedly, we do find (mostly negative)

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83 Max. *Or*. 24.4.

84 Max. *Or*. 41.3 is probably the only place where Maximus verbally hints at Demosthenes (8.26), but this reference seems to be directly triggered by the preceding historical reference to Philip of Macedonia. Cf. Trapp (1997a), 325 n. 16.

references to the beautiful and boastful politician Alcibiades,[85] but this should not surprise us much, as he is also staged quite frequently in philosophical writings as a perverted pupil and lover of Socrates. By contrast, we find no Aeschines (according to Philostratus, the founding father of the Second Sophistic),[86] no Andocides, no Antiphon, no Lycurgus,[87] no Dinarchus, no Isaeus, no Demades, and no Hyperides. Lysias the logographer is mentioned only twice,[88] both times for his famous speech on love cited in Plato's *Phaedrus*, so not in a political or forensic context.

Perhaps the most surprising absence of all these orators is Isocrates. After all, Isocrates is a case *sui generis*, who used rhetoric primarily for epideictic and educational purposes, and who advertised his own rhetorical practice as an introduction to philosophy. Some aspects of Isocrates' approach, such as the polished rhetorical style of his speeches, the blend of rhetoric and philosophy, and the educational aspirations run remarkably parallel to Maximus' own dynamic approach to philosophy.[89] Yet, for some reason, Isocrates' primacy and exemplarity is nowhere acknowledged, let alone used to justify Maximus' own philosophical practice.

The absence of all the aforementioned orators can probably best be explained by the demands of Maximus' own philosophical self-presentation. Practising rhetoric is one thing, but self-consciously referring to it as an authoritative part of Greek tradition is not entirely compatible, it appears, with Maximus' philosophical aspirations. The question is also what he has to lose (or gain) with a reference to the great Athenian orators. In case of Demosthenes, Aeschines, and their likes, there is no real reason for Maximus to even acknowledge their existence, as they have never claimed to assert philosophical truths and were not regarded in this way by subsequent generations. They rather belong to the rhetorical repertoire, where they are used as canonical examples whose styles ought to be learned through imitation.[90] Therefore, Maximus probably thought it fit to neglect these figures altogether, as such references may have put question marks over Maximus' own commitment to the field of

85 Max. *Or.* 1.9; 3.8; 6.6 (4×); 7.4 (2×); 7.7 (3×); 8.6; 18.4 (2×); 18.5; 18.6; 18.9 (3×); 21.3; 22.5; 25.7 (2×); 27.6 (2×); 32.8; 38.4 (2×); 39.4; 39.5 (3×); 41.4.

86 The Aeschines mentioned in Max. *Or.* 1.9; 18.5; and 22.6 is Aeschines the Socratic, not the famous orator.

87 The Lycurgus mentioned in Max. *Or.* 6.5; 6.7; 17.5; 19.1; 23.2 (3×); 32.10; 33.5; 36.5; 36.6; 37.6 is Lycurgus the Spartan lawgiver.

88 Max. *Or.* 18.5; 18.7.

89 For Isocrates' concept of rhetorical education, see Lombard (1990).

90 See, e.g., the illuminative passage on imitation in Longin. 13.2–14.2.

philosophy. It remains remarkable, though, that such a rich aspect of Greek cultural heritage, of which Maximus nevertheless bears the fruits, is entirely neglected in his work.

In case of Isocrates, one could argue that he himself claimed to teach philosophy to his students of rhetoric; yet, Isocrates' subsequent reception has primarily focused on his rhetorical merits, which has stood in the way of regarding and presenting him as a prototypical philosopher.[91] Therefore, it was probably the safest option for Maximus to neglect this self-proclaimed philosopher altogether, even if the latter's paradigm may have been quite close to his own. To give a blunt modern parallel: from a rhetorical point of view, if a capitalist thinker suddenly turned to Karl Marx to support his ideas concerning the working of socio-economical structures, the odds would be fairly small that he would be able to convince an audience of his true commitment to capitalist models. In quite a similar vein, it would be very, if not too audacious to turn to someone who (despite his own assertions) is generally regarded as an *orator*, in order to justify *philosophical* claims.

While this may serve as an explanation of Maximus' neglect of the rhetorical tradition, it still remains quite odd that he does not resort to other, more philosophical authorities to justify his practice of philosophical speech delivery, as some of his contemporaries did. As we have seen in the first chapter, Apuleius gave a tendentious yet self-confident interpretation of Plato as a rhetorician in his own right who made a distinction between good and bad rhetoric. This appropriation ought to be situated within Apuleius' strategic attempt to define his proper place between the fields of philosophy and rhetoric as a good philosophical orator. Aelius Aristides, for his part, defined Homer, who was seen as a prime philosopher by Maximus and many others, as a master of rhetoric.[92] The fact that Homer was seen as an authority in both the field of philosophy and in the field of rhetoric—at least by Aristides—could also serve as a possible legit-

91 Cf., e.g., D.H. *Comp.verb*. 23, where Isocrates is ranked positively among the orators (ῥητόρων); Plut. *Quaest.conv*. 613ab, where Isocrates is called a sophist (notice also Crates' implicit distinction between philosophical talk and the rhetorical talk of Isocrates); and Arist. 23.2, where Aristides labels Isocrates as a distinguished and ancient sophist—a rare instance in Aristides where 'sophist' is not primarily used in a negative sense (τις τῶν ἐλλογίμων καὶ τῶν παλαιῶν σοφιστῶν).

92 See Kindstrand (1973), 225. Notice that Kindstrand, speculating about Maximus' reason not to touch upon this image of Homer, states that this is "wahrscheinlich wegen seiner Bestrebung völlig als Philosoph betrachtet zu werden und seiner platonfreundlichen Haltung, die diese Frage für ihn hätte peinlich machen können."

imation for Maximus' rhetorical philosophizing, yet none of these discursive chances appears to have been taken by the Tyrian.

Quite similarly, for a superficial reader of Maximus' texts, it may also be striking that Maximus' discussion of the liberal arts in his thirty-seventh oration largely passes over the art of rhetoric and pays more attention to music instead.[93] Under closer scrutiny, however, it appears that Maximus did not want the audience to associate him too intimately with the practice of rhetoric. As may be expected from an Imperial philosopher, in order to gain philosophical credibility, Maximus apparently does not hesitate to dissimulate the fact that some characteristics of his orations are a result of the heritage of the sophistic and rhetorical traditions; rather, he places his emphasis squarely on his adherence to philosophy. In a way somewhat reminiscent of Sextus Empiricus, though not so explicit, rhetoric is—in high contrast to the field of philosophy—*not* represented as an age-old and venerable historical discipline that has handed down its artful findings, but rather as a self-evident practice intertwined with the mere use of words and discourse, which seems to come quite naturally to the speaker.

Maximus comes closest to authorizing his own rhetorical practice as philosophical during his impersonation of the philosophical Anaxagoras, whose self-defence before the citizens of Clazomenae is used by Maximus as an occasion to address the general argument in favour of the contemplative life. However, even though Maximus here presents a remarkably tendentious interpretation of the figure of Anaxagoras as a self-proclaimed contemplative figure, who is nonetheless capable of defending himself in the same rhetorical style as Maximus, and who already seems to lean towards the reconciliation of the active and the contemplative life that Maximus will advocate toward the end of the sixteenth oration,[94] the Tyrian does not go on to lift this impersonation to the level of an explicit metapoetic legitimation, but leaves the consequences of his impersonation to mere suggestion. In this respect, in refraining from explicitly defending his practice of philosophical oratory on the basis of traditional authorities, it appears that Maximus, when compared with some contemporaries of his, proves himself quite radically unwilling to jeopardize the philosophical credibility of the tradition *and* of his own knowledgeable persona.

93 Max. Or. 37.3.

94 For an extensive analysis, see Lauwers—Roskam (2012).

4.3 *The Ideal Orator is a Philosopher*

Although Maximus does not rely on sources from the rhetorical field to back up his speaking practice, we cannot discard the obvious rhetorical nature of Maximus' preaching style. This rhetorical style can probably be seen as an attempt to be considered an insider to the world of the audience, who, despite Maximus' overt adherence to philosophical discourse, may have regarded the rhetorical tone of his orations as reassuringly close to their interpretative horizon, which was obviously shaped by rhetorical education and verbal performances. In this respect, Maximus' Atticizing vocabulary and grammar must have functioned as a bridge between the rhetorical world of the audience, where Attic prose (as practised by Plato and other canonized authors) was taken as the norm for proper speech composition, and the world of philosophy, where the acquisition of a Platonic vocabulary was equally important in order to join philosophical debates.

With the traditional orators being rejected from the *dialexeis*, Maximus had to come up with his own apology for his rhetorical treatment of philosophical themes. We already saw how, in his first oration, he stretches the acceptable postulation that a philosopher ought to be capable of adjusting his *logos* to every subject matter to such an extent that the use of splendid rhetorical skill is portrayed as a natural result of his own adherence to philosophy. By making rhetoric a subordinate attribute of the repertoire of a prototypical (and thus protean) philosopher, Maximus manages to turn his rhetorical handling of the *dialexeis* in a strong argument in favour of his philosophical character.

A similar type of reasoning runs through the twenty-fifth oration as well, where it is argued that the good speaker is in fact a philosophical speaker.[95] This basically means that Maximus' own rhetorical speech, occupied as it is with philosophical truth and wisdom, is defended both as a good philosophical speaking style and as the only truly valuable speaking style. In this way, Maximus manages to bridge the gap with his audience (which probably came to him for the rhetorical style as much as for the philosophical content), while still emphasizing the exclusivity of the field of philosophy. Moreover, if we accept that Maximus' *dialexeis* were to a certain extent composed for the sake of reproduction by the listeners, the argumentation developed here may also be designed so as advertise the advantages of assuming a philosophical self-representation through the rhetorical display of philosophical

95 For a more extensive analysis of the self-advertising aspect of this twenty-fifth oration, see Lauwers (2012).

knowledge. The following passage shows how philosophical distinction can neatly contribute to a (public) speaker's self-presentation:

> (…) ὧν συμπάντων κρείττονα χρὴ γενέσθαι *τὸν τῷ φιλοσόφῳ λόγῳ συνανιστάμενον ῥήτορα ἀληθῆ*, οὐκ ἀργόν, οὐδὲ ἐκλελυμένον, οὐδ' ἐπίχριστον κατὰ τὴν τέχνην, οὐδὲ ἐν δικαστηρίῳ μόνον ἐπ' ἀμφιβόλῳ ἐπικουρίᾳ τεταγμένον, ἀλλὰ πανταχοῦ καὶ ἐν ἅπαντι ἐξεταζόμενον, ἐν μὲν ἐκκλησίαις σύμβουλον φρόνιμον, ἐν δὲ δικαστηρίοις ἀγωνιστὴν δίκαιον, ἐν δὲ πανηγύρεσιν ἀγωνιστὴν σώφρονα, ἐν δὲ παιδείᾳ διδάσκαλον ἐπιστήμονα· οὐ περὶ Θεμιστοκλέους μόνον τοῦ μηκέτι ὄντος, οὐδ' ἐπ' Ἀθηναίοις τοῖς τότε, οὐδ' ὑπὲρ ἀριστέως τοῦ μηδαμοῦ, οὐδὲ κατὰ μοιχοῦ λέγοντα μοιχὸν ὄντα, οὐδὲ κατὰ ὑβριστοῦ ὑβριστὴν ὄντα, ἀλλ' ἀπηλλαγμένον τῶν παθῶν τούτων, ἵνα γένηται κατήγορος ἀδικημάτων ἀληθής. Τοιοῦτος ἐξ ἀγαθῆς παλαίστρας ἀγωνιστὴς γίγνεται, *λόγων μεστὸς ἀκολακεύτων, καὶ ἠσκημένων ὑγιῶς, καὶ δυναμένων ἄγειν πειθοῖ καὶ βίᾳ ἐκπληκτικῇ τὸ πλησιάζον πᾶν.*
>
> All these [viz. the earthly feelings] are things that the true orator who allies himself to philosophical argument must rise above. He must not be the sluggish and feeble practitioner of a meretricious art, whose only place is in the courtroom, where he gives his assistance to both sides indifferently. He must prove himself in every place and every role, as a prudent counsellor in the Assembly, a just contender at festivals, and a knowledgeable teacher in the schoolroom. He should not speak about the long-dead Themistocles, nor in praise of bygone generation of Athenians, nor about a non-existent hero; he should not find himself denouncing adulterers and rapists for crimes of which he too is guilty. He should be free of all such experiences, so as to make himself a candid scourge of wrongdoing. This is the nature of the contestant from a good palaestra; he must be full of words that are free from the taint of flattery, healthily trained, and able to command all who come within range with their persuasiveness and inspirational force.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 25.6

Maximus here launches an attack against the forensic speakers of his day, suggesting that they meretriciously lend their voice to whichever party hires them, regardless of the truth; and against sophistic declaimers, pointing out that the sophists' practice of legal or historical declamation (concerning Themistocles or other past figures and events) is to be put aside if one wants to become a proper orator, who, just like Maximus himself, devotes his attention to philosophical argument. The proper philosophical orator should make use of the

entire arsenal of persuasive and inspiring techniques that rhetoric has in store for him, but only for as far as its ultimate goal is the promulgation of the truth.

Finally, the twenty-second oration, dealing with the question of the right type of entertainment at a party, seems to follow the same type of reasoning.[96] After having denounced other forms of entertainment such as sophistic declamation, dance, and history, Maximus concludes his speech with some enigmatic references to the old poets Homer and Hesiod, and the way in which their songs honour the gods. At the end, we thus receive no resolute answer to the question initially proposed, but the passage immediately before this elevated address to the gods suggests that philosophy ought to be seen as providing the right type of *logoi* at a party. Throughout his self-confident rejection of various types of public entertainment, Maximus eventually seems to advertise, albeit through innuendo, his philosophy as a proper response to his audience's demand for a decent pastime at their dinners and symposia.

Maximus' metapoetic statements concerning the status and use of rhetoric are so consistently maintained throughout these speeches that they may quite certainly be interpreted as an important element of his self-promotion. Maximus' position balances itself quite cunningly between the philosophical tradition and his own rhetorical paradigm. For while many philosophers would confirm that a philosopher should ideally be the man to give advice concerning many aspects of human life,[97] to maintain consistency between words and deeds,[98] and to rule others with supreme insight and justice,[99] they were probably less eager to support Maximus' audacious standpoint that his powerful rhetoric is an important aspect of an ideal philosopher's repertoire. As it turns out, even Maximus himself (*qua* philosopher) would not be willing to affirm his intellectual debt to the rhetorical tradition (even though this is undeniably the case), merely claiming that his rhetorical ability is a natural result of his commitment to philosophy.

96 A more extensive analysis of this oration is offered in section 7.1.

97 See, e.g., the wide variety of topics about which philosophers such as Epictetus, Dio, and Plutarch consider themselves capable of giving advice to their audience.

98 For the inextricable connection between thinking and living in ancient philosophy, see Hadot (1995).

99 Think for instance of Plutarch's argument that a philosopher should converse with those in power (*Max.princ.*) and Dio's philosophical self-presentation in his four oration on kingship (1–4).

4.4 *Truth, Persuasion, and Scepticism in Maximus*[100]

In these paragraphs, I will aim to investigate to what extent Maximus' *dialexeis* can be interpreted against the backdrop of (Academic) Scepticism. In his illuminative study of Imperial philosophy, Jan Opsomer has convincingly argued that within the Middle-Platonic philosophy of the High Empire, there was a tendency towards entirely or partly following the Sceptical branch of Platonism that originated in the Platonic Academy of the Hellenistic period.[101] We already encountered the cases of the 'radical' Academic Favorinus and the 'mild' Academic Plutarch, who can in turn be opposed to the programmatically doctrinal Platonist Galen. Where is Maximus to be placed in this debate between Sceptical and doctrinal Platonists? Opsomer, for his part, appears to suggest that Maximus has partly interiorized Sceptical vocabulary and concepts in his philosophical discourse, thus illustrating the wide diffusion of Academic tendencies among Platonist philosophers.[102] Moreover, the fact that Maximus stands for a common-sense non-technical approach to philosophy may in fact partly be legitimized within the field of philosophy through Sceptical paradigms, as Lucian's offhand Scepticism and Sextus Empiricus' programmatic assault on the arts illustrate. What fell outside the scope of Opsomer's study, however, but what is important in this context, is the question of whether Maximus was in fact an active and programmatic Sceptic. Again, much depends on interpretation, but it is hard to avoid the impression that despite Maximus' superficial incorporation of fashionable Academic discourses in his *dialexeis*, we cannot speak of a programmatic Sceptical project, but rather of a casual adoption of a zetetic attitude in order to make a philosophical impression on his audience. In this context, consider Philostratus' 'popular' association, discussed above, of the philosophical method with a tentative and humble search for wisdom. If this method was indeed commonly believed to be quintessentially philosophical, it is not far-fetched to interpret Maximus' uncommitted adoption of Academic tendencies as a discursive attempt to portray himself as a proper philosopher.

A good starting point for our investigation is the relation between truth and persuasion in Maximus, as the problem of persuasion as an epistemological criterion is also a much debated topic in Academic circles. Carneades, the head

100 The fact that my discussion of Maximus' alleged Scepticism takes place under the heading of Maximus' representation of the field of *rhetoric* illustrates once again the difficulties that arise in trying to make a clear distinction between the field of rhetoric and that of philosophy.

101 See Opsomer (1998).

102 See Opsomer (1998), 267.

of the so-called 'Third Academy', must have been the first to introduce the concept of the *pithanon* (that what is probable or convincing) in Academic thought.[103] The probable helps an Academic Sceptic deal with practical situations in life. Interestingly, this does not necessarily imply that the *pithanon* leads towards the truth. Consistent with his Academic attitude, Carneades maintains the uncertainty of his own assumptions, thus neither denying nor affirming that there is a link between what is probable and what is true. Among later receptions of Carneades' concept, such as in Plutarch, we see that the probable is used as a criterion with more flexibility than the original inventor would have condoned. Consequently, the concept of speculation tends to take over table discussions,[104] intercultural dialogue,[105] and 'scientific' treatises where Plutarch tends to put forward some hypotheses concerning certain phenomena and then picks the most probable option.[106] The probable, serving both rhetorical and logical purposes, thus closes the gap between social discourses, which are heavily determined by rhetorical dynamics of persuasion, and philosophical discourses, which emphasize the speculative nature of one's own assumptions.

It is time now to switch over to Maximus. As we have seen, Maximus is not a fan of the masses, who are easily persuaded by cunning rhetoricians perverting the truth and convincing the people of false ideas. We have also already encountered a number of instances where the Tyrian declares himself a vehement enemy of sophistic assertions that may be convincing but not grounded in the truth. These passages indicate that Maximus recognizes that there is no absolute link between truth and persuasion, at least not when we are dealing with a public of ordinary people who have no sense for truthful assertions. The same attitude appears from Maximus' narration about the philosopher Aristeas in the thirty-eighth oration.[107] Aristeas is said to have been unable to convince the people of Proconnesus that he was in fact a philosopher, since he could not produce a teacher for his wisdom. Maximus then points out that Aristeas, aware of his awkward position, invented a tale that his soul could escape his body and fly over the earth, gathering all sorts

103 See Opsomer (1998), 170, with relevant bibliography.

104 See, e.g., Plut. *Q.C.* See Kechagia (2011b) for the philosophical and especially Platonic foundation of the *Table Talk*. Favorinus' role as a table guest in Gellius' *Attic Nights* is an illustration of the same tendency.

105 See, e.g., Plut. *Q.Rom.* and *Q.Graec.*

106 See, e.g., Plut. *Prim.Frig.* and *Q.Nat.*

107 See Max. *Or.* 38.3.

of wisdom that are unavailable to ordinary men. In this case, probably because Aristeas is regarded as a philosopher (not as a sophist), the tale is not castigated by Maximus, although it is explicitly stated that it is invented (and thus not real). Even more remarkably, Aristeas appeared to have been more convincing (πιθανώτερος) with this tale than fellow philosophers such as Anaxagoras and Xenophanes. This passage thus testifies to Maximus' readiness to acknowledge that an invented argument can be more convincing than the plain truth.

Nevertheless, Maximus' own discourse often seems to establish a link between philosophical truth and rhetorical persuasion. Indeed, we can observe that, when Maximus communicates his ideas to the audience, he frequently uses the concept of persuasion to arrive at the truths in which he believes (and in which his listeners should believe). In the nineteenth oration, Maximus starts his second discussion about love with an invocation of Hermes Logios (the god of orators and persuasive speech),[108] the goddess Persuasion, the Graces, and Eros himself, who are all summoned to steer the discussion into the desired direction.[109] Especially the occurrence of the former two in this list seems to point to Maximus' ambition to not only speak truthfully, but also persuasively.

Moreover, when Maximus talks about the persuasiveness of philosophical discourse, it appears that philosophical discourse needs the truth in order to be convincing. In Maximus' fourth *dialexis*, he links the persuasiveness of both poetry and philosophy to their truthfulness:

> Ἐὰν δὲ ἀφελῆς ἑκατέρου τὸ ἀληθές, καὶ τοῦ ποιητοῦ καὶ τοῦ φιλοσόφου, ἄμουσον μὲν τὴν ᾠδὴν ποιεῖς, μῦθον δὲ τὸν λόγον· *ἄνευ δὲ τοῦ ἀληθοῦς* μήτε μύθῳ ποιητοῦ *διαπιστεύσῃς* τὸ πάμπαν, μήτε φιλοσόφου λόγῳ.
>
> But if you deprive either of them, poet or philosopher, of the truth, then you rob the poem of its poetry and turn philosophical doctrine into myth. If there is no truth then you should give no credence at all either to the poet's myth or to the philosopher's doctrine.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 4.7

Quite significantly, the public is encouraged not to be persuaded by poetry or philosophy if their respective message is not true. In other words, the listeners should train themselves to spot the truth in poetic texts and philosoph-

108 See Trapp (1997a), 169 n. 1.

109 See Max. *Or.* 19.1.

ical doctrines. Maximus thus inverts the 'normal' way in which persuasion works. Normally, people will accept what is true if it is persuasive; in this case, they have to *know* it is true in order to allow themselves to be *persuaded* by it.

When a traditional authority itself fails to persuade Maximus at face value, this very fact triggers the speaker's sense for an allegorical interpretation.[110] An illustrative example of this is the beginning of the tenth oration, in which the story of Epimenides is narrated.[111] Maximus tells his audience that the latter's dreamt encounter with Truth and Justice is only to be taken as a mythical fiction under which a deeper truth is hidden (which is made explicit through Maximus' interpretative efforts). Moreover, Maximus asserts that Epimenides would have been more convincing (πιθανώτερος), had he relied on a Homeric passage backing up the dream metaphor. In this way, Maximus' discussion itself receives a self-advertising undertone, as the speaker's capability to come up with a Homeric parallel further strengthens (his interpretation of) Epimenides' narration. The ultimate suggestion seems to be that Maximus' own message is still more trustworthy than Epimenides' story, which is in itself already attributed the status of a truthful narration.

The examples above illustrate Maximus' belief that there is a certain truth, and that this truth can be known by the speaker. As for the listeners, they are encouraged to move away from superficial and untrue beliefs and join the speaker's sublime insights. The first paragraphs of the twenty-first oration contain a similarly explicit form of encouragement to share Maximus' philosophical perspective. In the earlier speeches, Maximus had spoken of the division between 'good' love and 'bad' love. By contrast, he now asserts that there is no such thing as bad love, because the deviant variant of proper love does not deserve to be called this way. The first paragraphs of this oration show Maximus' very self-confident discourse, which leaves no room for doubt that the twenty-first oration exposes the truth and nothing but the truth. Consider the following passage:

> Δοκῶ δή μοι, κατὰ τὸν ποιητὴν ἐκεῖνον, δεήσεσθαι καὶ αὐτὸς παλινῳδίας ἐν τοῖς περὶ τοῦ ἔρωτος λόγοις, θεὸς γὰρ καὶ οὗτος, καὶ οὐχ ἧττον τῆς Ἑλένης ἐπιτιθέναι δίκην τοῖς πλημμελοῦσιν εἰς αὐτὸν ἐρρωμενέστατος. Τί δὴ οὖν ἐστιν τὸ πλημμέλημα, ὅπερ καὶ ἀναμαχέσασθαι δεῖν φημι ἡμᾶς; Δεινόν, καὶ μέγα, καὶ δεόμενον γενναίου ποιητοῦ καὶ τελεστοῦ, εἰ μέλλοι τις ἱκανῶς ἐξευμενιεῖσθαι

110 I will address the topic of interpretation and allegory below (5.2).

111 Max. *Or.* 10.1.

ἀδέκαστον δαίμονα, οὐ τρίποδας ἑπτὰ δούς, οὐδὲ χρυσοῦ τάλαντα δέκα, οὐδὲ γυναῖκας Λεσβιάδας, οὐδὲ ἵππους Τρωικούς, ἀλλὰ λόγον λόγῳ, πονηρὸν χρηστῷ, καὶ *ψευδῆ ἀληθεῖ ἐξαλείψας.*

I think that I too, just like the poet [Stesichorus], stand in need of a palinode in my discussion of Love. He too is a god, no less mighty than Helen in his power to inflict punishment on those who sin against him. What then is this 'sin' that I say we have to make up for? A great and grave one, requiring the services of a great poet and priest, if we are to have any hope of placating so stern a divinity, not by presenting him with seven tripods, or ten talents of gold, or Lesbian women, or Trojan steeds, but by erasing one account with another, bad with good and false with true.

MAX. *Or.* 21.1

Maximus' great reverence for the god Eros forces him to revise some of the things he said earlier that were apparently 'bad' and 'false'. The passage thus affirms that there is most definitely a truthful account on love to make, and, more importantly, that it is within Maximus' reach to deliver it. In this respect, Maximus ostentatiously follows in the footsteps of the Socrates of Plato's *Phaedrus* and *Symposium.*

After a short anecdote about the poet Anacreon and the child Cleobulus, Maximus goes on to represent himself as naturally driven towards a truthful account, using a very overtly rhetorical style full of tendentious questions and amplificatory expositions.

Τί κωλύει δὴ καὶ ἡμᾶς ἀναμαχέσασθαι τήμερον, ⟨καὶ⟩ κατὰ τὸν Ἀνακρέοντα ἐκεῖνον δοῦναι δίκην τῷ ἔρωτι αὐτοὺς ἑκόντας γλώττης ἀδίκου; Τὸ φάναι ὅτι ὁ ἔρως ἐπὶ μοιχείαν ἀνάπτει, ὥσπερ τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον, ἢ ἐπὶ παρανομίαν, ὡς τὸν Ξέρξην, ἢ ἐπὶ ὕβριν, ὡς Κριτόβουλον, καὶ ἀνατιθέναι θεῷ πρᾶγμα ἄθεον, πῶς οὐ πλημμελές; Οὑτωσὶ δὲ αὐτὸ θεασώμεθα. Ὁ ἔρως ἄλλου του ἔρως ἢ κάλλους ἐστίν; Οὐδαμῶς· σχολῇ γὰρ ἂν εἴη ἔρως, εἰ μὴ κάλλους εἴη. Ὁπόταν λέγωμεν ἐρᾶν χρημάτων Δαρεῖον, ἢ Ξέρξην τῆς Ἑλλήνων γῆς, ἢ Κλέαρχον πολέμου, ἢ Ἀγησίλαον τιμῆς, ἢ Κριτίαν τυραννίδος, ἢ Ἀλκιβιάδην Σικελίας, καὶ Γύλιππον χρυσίου, ἆρα κάλλος τι ὁρῶντες ἐμφαινόμενον, τὴν πρὸς αὐτὸ ἐπαγωγὴν ἔρωτα ἐπονομάζοντες, ἕκαστον τούτων ἐρᾶν φαμεν, τὸν μὲν τοῦδε, τὸν δὲ τοῦδε, ἄλλον ἄλλου; Πολλοῦ γε καὶ δεῖ· ἢ γὰρ ἄν, τὰ αἴσχιστα τῶν ἐν ἀνθρώποις πραγμάτων τῷ μὴ προσήκοντι ὀνόματι ἐπικοσμοῦντες, πλημμελοῖμεν ἂν εἰς τὸ ἀληθὲς αὐτό. Ποῦ γὰρ ἢ ἐν χρήμασιν κάλλος, τῷ πάντων πραγμάτων κακίστῳ, ἢ ἐν πολέμῳ, τῷ πάντων ἀβεβαιοτάτῳ, ἢ ἐν τυραννίδι, τῷ πάντων ἀγριωτάτῳ, ἢ ἐν χρυσῷ, τῷ πάντων γαυροτάτῳ;

> What is there to prevent us too from making amends today, and offering willing reparation to Love for our wicked tongue? How can it fail to be a sin to say that Love inflames men to commit adultery like Paris, or to break the law like Xerxes, or to act the bully like Critobulus, and in general to make a god responsible for impious actions. Let us consider the matter like this. Is the object of love anything other than beauty? By no means: love would hardly be love at all if it were not love of beauty. Whenever we say that Darius is 'in love' with money, or Xerxes with the land of Greece, or Clearchus with war, or Agesilaus with honour, or Critias with tyrannical power, or Alcibiades with Sicily, or Gylippus with gold, is it because we can see some obvious kind of beauty and give the name 'love' to the attraction towards it, that we say each of them is 'in love with' his respective target, one with one thing and one with another? Far from it. We would indeed be sinning against truth itself, by adorning the ugliest of human activities with a name that does not belong to them. Where is the beauty in money, which is the basest of all things? Or in war, the most impious? Or in tyranny, the savagest? Or in gold, which causes the greatest conceit?
>
> MAX. *Or.* 21.3

Here, truth is no unreachable entity that provokes the speaker to assume a zetetic attitude; it is rather a firm basis that can be arrived at through rational reasoning as conducted by Maximus himself. In this process, Maximus naturally makes use of all the rhetorical techniques that enable him to press his point home (even the rhetorical questions are answered in the audience's place, so that the message could not possibly be any clearer). Once again, rhetorical argumentation seems to kill the audience's freedom to speculate in a Sceptical fashion about this philosophical issue.

In the twenty-eighth oration on the right cure for pain, we appear to see a less self-confident side of Maximus, as he deals with the right cure for the soul:

> Ἐγὼ μὲν γὰρ *ἀπορῶ* εἴ τινα ἐξευρήσω δεινὸν τὴν τέχνην κατὰ τὸν Χείρωνα κεῖνον, ἵνα μοι διπλᾶ τἀγαθὰ ἔλθῃ· καὶ *οὔτε πιστεύω* τῷ τεχνιτεύματι (τὸ γὰρ ἔργον μέγα, τῆς Ὄσσης καὶ τοῦ Ὀλύμπου ὑψηλότερον), *οὔτε ἀπιστῶ* κομιδῇ (τί γὰρ οὐκ ἂν ἐθελήσασα ἡ πάντολμος ψυχὴ ἐπιτεχνήσαιτο;). *Διὰ μέσου δὴ ἥκων πίστεως καὶ ἀπιστίας, πρὸς ἄγνοιαν τοῦ εἰδέναι* τῇδέ μοι δοκῶ διαιτήσειν τὴν στάσιν.

> I for my part am at a loss to know whether I will be able to discover anyone skilled in this science, in the manner of Chiron, of whom we spoke, so as

> to reap that twofold benefit; I neither trust his contrivances (the task is a great one, more arduous than Ossa and Olympus), nor yet do I entirely mistrust them. What might the all-daring soul not devise if it wanted to? Suspended as I am between trust and mistrust, I think I will take the following route to settle the issue, in the face of my inability to know for sure.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 28.3–4

One could believe that we here witness the emergence of a more zetetic attitude in Maximus. Yet the vocabulary used, with the emphasis on trust and mistrust, seems to point to a rhetorical approach to the matter at hand. Notice also that Maximus' uncertainty is not so much provoked by a doctrinal issue as by the question whether someone in this world will actually be up to the task. It is this performed uncertainty which causes him to lower his self-confident voice. Quite typically, this is an attitude that can also be explained by his philosophical self-presentation, which does not allow him to advertise himself directly as the panacea for the audience's problems. By representing himself as someone who does not know (and who *is* not) the right answer, Maximus avoids some potential damage to his philosophical ethos, while at the same time cultivating the type of innuendo that ought to convince his public, which can only be assumed to be equally well at a loss as the performer in front, of the speaker's ultimate ability to come as close to the truth as possible.

This interpretation seems to be confirmed by the remainder of the passage:

> Ὑποπτεύω τοι μίαν μὲν εἶναι τὴν τέχνην, μὴ μέντοι δυοῖν, ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος, ἀλλὰ τῇ πραγματείᾳ τοῦ κρείττονος τὴν τοῦ ἑτέρου ἐλάττωσιν ἐξιωμένην. Ὑπῆλθεν γάρ με λέγοντα ὁμοῦ τὸ τοῦ Σωκράτους πρὸς τὸν Χαρμίδην, *οὐκ αὐτὸ ἐκεῖνο*, ἡ Θρᾴκιος ἐπῳδη, *ἀλλὰ ἀντιστρόφως*. Ὁ μὲν γάρ φησιν *σὺν τῷ ὅλῳ ἰᾶσθαι καὶ τὸ μέρος, καὶ ἀδύνατον εἶναι σωτηρίαν παραγίνεσθαι τῷ μορίῳ πρὶν καὶ τῷ πάντι ἔλθῃ*· ὀρθῶς λέγων, κἀγὼ πείθομαι, ὅσα γε ἐπὶ σώματος· ἐν δὲ τῇ ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος συζυγίᾳ ἀντιστρόφως φημὶ ἔχειν· ᾧ γὰρ ἂν τὸ μέρος καλῶς ἔχῃ, ἀνάγκη ⟨καὶ⟩ τὸ πᾶν τούτῳ ἔχειν καλῶς, οὐχ ὁποτερονοῦν τοῖν μεροῖν, θάτερον δέ· ἡ γὰρ τοῦ χείρονος πρὸς τὸ κρεῖττον ὁμιλία ἐκ τῆς τοῦ κρείττονος σωτηρίας ἀνάπτει τὸ χεῖρον. Ἦ σοι δοκεῖ ἄνθρωπος ὑγιαίνων τῇ ψυχῇ λόγον τινὰ ποιεῖσθαι, προσπεσούσης ὀδύνης καὶ τραυμάτων, ἤ τινος ἄλλης κακουχίας σωμάτων; Οὐδαμῶς μὰ Δία. Ἐκείνην δὴ τὴν ἰατρικὴν *μαστευτέον* καὶ *βασανιστέον*, καὶ ἐκείνην τὴν ὑγίειαν *ποριστέον* καὶ *ἐκθηρατέον*, ᾗ τάχα μὲν καὶ περὶ τουτὶ τὸ σῶμα ῥᾳστώνη ἕψεται, εἰ δὲ μή, πάντως γε ἡ ὑπεροψία τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ δεινῶν.

> I suspect that there is indeed just one science, but that it does not work on two objects, soul and body; instead, by dealing directly with the superior element alone, it also cures the other, inferior one. Even as I speak, Socrates' remark to Charmides comes to mind: not exactly his 'Thracian incantation', but the other way around. Socrates says that when the whole is cured, the part is cured too, and that it is impossible for soundness to be restored to the part before it comes to the whole. He is quite right in this, and I agree with him as far as the body is concerned; but I maintain that the reverse is true in the case of the combination of body and soul. For whenever someone has the part in good condition, then necessarily the whole must be good; not anywhich of the two parts, but the other one (the soul, that is).[112] The association of better with worse makes the security of the worse depend on that of the better. Or do you think that a man whose soul is healthy takes any account of the onset of pain from wounds or from any other form of physical ill-being? By no means. This is the kind of medical skill that we seek out and test for; this is the kind of health that must be supplied and hunted down, the kind that will be followed by physical relief too, or if not, at least by a disregard for physical suffering.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 28.4

Given Maximus' preceding performance of uncertainty, one would at least expect him to respect the traditional authorities that come to mind when speaking of the matter. However, quite the opposite is true, as Socrates' assertions about pain are self-confidently rejected by Maximus' intuition when it comes to the relationship between body and soul. In the end, Maximus still follows his own instinct, coming up with rhetorical reasonings that are designed so as to persuade himself as well as the audience, and that are eventually turned into an imperative tone that strongly reaffirms the cogent truthfulness of Maximus' message (cf. μαστευτέον, βασανιστέον, ποριστέον, and ἐκθηρατέον). Maximus' actual speaking practice thus somewhat contradicts his performance of

112 The sentence structure is quite sloppy here, which has invited Reiske to suggest an addition of οὔ after θἄτερον δέ, which is the basis of both Trapp's edition and his translation. However, the manuscript text (given by Koniaris), despite the clumsy structure of the sentence, actually makes sense to me. I believe Maximus here wants to claim that the soul is far more powerful than the body in determining someone's health. This seems to me like a sensible Stoicizing answer to a Socratic reasoning about bodily health. For this reason, I have given a translation based on the original text instead of following Trapp's translation, adding that by θἄτερον, the soul is meant.

uncertainty. If there are some Academic tendencies in Maximus, they testify to Maximus' strategic conformism to philosophical discourse rather than to his sincere commitment to the Sceptical tradition.

To conclude, then, whenever Maximus speaks about values of truth and persuasion, he finds himself in a complicated position, for, on the one hand, he condemns any form of rhetoric that is morally indifferent and attaches itself to persuasion instead of the truth, but, on the other, he himself quite bluntly uses the concept of persuasion to arrive at his own ideas, which are subsequently presented as cogently true. Nevertheless, this apparent inconsistency is ignored in Maximus' discourse, as if his *logos* is guided to the truth as naturally as others to erroneous reasonings. As for the public, they are quite self-evidently assumed to be convinced by Maximus' discourse, provided that they want to reason like a philosopher (as most if not all of them must have been eager to do). Whenever Maximus' approaches are somewhat in line with those of Sceptical philosophers, it is at best, I believe, on a very basic level that does not show any more commitment than any other form of social discourse in which truth and persuasion are considered to be at stake.

4.5 *Maximus'* **Dissoi Logoi** *and Scepticism*

Now that we are taking up the question of Maximus' alleged Scepticism, it is worthwhile investigating to what extent his performance of *dissoi logoi* can serve as a proof of his adherence to Sceptical thought. After all, *disserere in utramque partem* was not only seen as a merely rhetorical practice, but was also accepted and authorized within a philosophical context by the Academic and the Aristotelian schools. Is it then possible that Maximus' performance of opposed arguments in two subsequent orations should be interpreted as an expression of Sceptical beliefs?

As already remarked in the discussion of the genre of the *dialexeis*, the Academy and the Peripatos may have played an important role in legitimizing the practice of philosophical lecturing in such manner as Maximus does, but it is highly doubtful whether all of his verbal endeavours ought to be reduced to the Sceptical use of the *thesis*. It is important to realize that Maximus' prescriptive affirmative tone remains present throughout his philosophical orations, and the occurrence of some *dissoi logoi* in his oeuvre hardly mitigate this overall discursive pose.

Concretely, there is a significant number of reasons to believe that Maximus' *dissoi logoi* are in themselves not enough to assume that Maximus was a programmatic Sceptic after all, and, conversely, that the use of such *dissoi logoi* ought to be understood apart from a Sceptical context, simply because Maximus did, in all likelihood, not regard himself as a Sceptic.

Let us start first with the interpretation of the *dissoi logoi* and their relative weight in the assessment of Maximus' alleged Scepticism. First of all, we should not be blind to the fact that, even if we take oration 32 as a sort of pseudo-*dissos logos* in relation with orations 29–31 and 33, we still only have 7 orations (15, 16, 23, 24, 32, 39, 40) in this opposing style, which account for only approximately 17 % of the orations we have. Secondly, when we examine them more closely, we can see that in the case of orations 15 and 16, there is a concrete resolution offered at the end of the latter oration, consisting of a doctrinal acceptance of both the active and the contemplative life, in which the contemplative life is eventually put forward as the most laudatory of the two.[113] In a similar fashion, oration 32 does not seem to be aimed at a suspension of judgement, but is rather framed in a larger discussion leading toward a doctrinal resolution of the tension. One can observe quite clearly that oration 33 is in fact a conclusion to the debate discussed from oration 29 on to the 32 (the latter of which performs the Epicurean view on human happiness). Maximus' philosophical inclinations may have inspired him to come up with an ultimate conclusion in which his own commitment to the anti-Epicurean tradition has been made explicit once more.

What remains in our corpus of 'true' *dissoi logoi* are a discussion of the dilemma between the life of a soldier and that of farmer, which is treated with numerous references to Homeric commonplaces and other literary embellishments, and a discussion between a Peripatetic and a Stoic persona concerning the degree of the Good, which is the only *real* philosophical dilemma for which no solution is offered. However, as I will discuss in the subchapter dealing with linear readings of Maximus' text,[114] it is entirely possible and probably even desirable to read in these two orations not so much as a Sceptic statement which urges the listeners to a constant state of *epochê*, but more so as an overview of philosophical commonplaces with which an aspiring philosopher can serve himself when dealing with this dilemma against a philosophical adversary. It thus seems that the main focus of Maximus' communication with his audience is still quite heavily on the transmission of relevant arguments and commonplaces to guide one's thoughts in a self-confident manner towards solutions for the physical and ethical issues brought up in philosophical discussions, or, more generally, in everyday life.

All in all, even on the basis of his performance of opposed opinions in his work, Maximus does not appear to emerge as a Sceptic. Quite to the contrary,

113 For a more extensive analysis of this reconciling judgement, see the next section (4.6).

114 See section 7.3.

there are two more reasons why there is no programmatic Scepticism in the *dialexeis*. Firstly, we have two orations (6 and 10) that deal in a more general manner with issues of epistemology, and neither of these appears to contain any trace of Sceptical ideas, at a moment when one would expect a programmatic Sceptic to finally show his true colours. Secondly, as I will discuss later,[115] Maximus tends to represent the philosophical tradition in a monolithic and univocal fashion, with only the Epicureans as apparent adversaries. This pose is entirely different from the popularized Sceptical way in which Lucian aims to bring the Stoic apprentice Hermotimus into a state of confusion and suspension of belief, by pointing to the many inconsistencies between philosophical schools and thus undermining their absolute truth claims. For all these reasons, it seems sensible to conclude that *if* Maximus turned out to be a programmatic Sceptic after all, he must have kept it very well hidden in his public performances.

In conclusion, compared with other philosophers from the Imperial era, Maximus' way of philosophizing is so exclusively expository that it did probably not presuppose too critical an audience. In persuading this audience, therefore, he must have relied on their trusting belief rather than on their talent for independent evaluation. Moreover, in this process of persuasion, Maximus' confident discourse, as well as many of his statements themselves, suggests the existence of a sort of ethical objectivity that must have guaranteed a stable form of knowledge and virtuous behaviour. While modern philosophical debates search for the possibility and the premises for such an ethical objectivity,[116] Maximus' self-assured discussion of various ethical sources merely proclaiming the same truthful doctrines and instructions, was probably a powerful rhetorical mechanism in establishing his ethos. And while some form of performed Scepticism may have played a role in the process of self-authorization, there is little ground to believe that Maximus sided with the Sceptics in a programmatic fashion.

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115 See section 5.3.

116 See, e.g., the collection of essays in Gill (ed.) (2005). In an essay in this bundle, i.e. Gill (2005), 31, the author talks about the remarkable position of the ancient *sophos*, who apparently can make the right decisions without the existence of objective rules to determine what this position will be. This immediately illustrates the great tension between the idea of philosophical truth and rhetorical persuasion.

4.6 *Forensic Tropes*

In these final paragraphs of the discussion of rhetoric in Maximus, we shall look more closely into the forensic tropes through which he cunningly turns philosophical issues into a domain where rhetoric is more obviously accepted, especially in the legal context of the Roman Empire. It must be remarked, however, that this literary technique is not without its parallels inside the field of philosophy. Plato famously claimed to have written down Socrates' *Apology* in front of the Athenian judges, which provided an excellent occasion—probably not seized in the same eloquent manner by the historical Socrates—to make the exemplary philosopher give an account of his life and his contribution to society. After Plato, Imperial authors such as Apuleius and Lucian also realized the great rhetorical potential of a trial for their own philosophical self-presentation, albeit, in the case of the former, probably an actual historical trial, and in the case of the latter, a fictional pastiche.

Despite these philosophical pedigrees, the use of forensic tropes is, for Maximus, not unproblematic. After all, on a number of occasions, Maximus proves himself not to be overly fond of human jurisdiction. A good example of this can be found in the twenty-ninth oration, where Maximus introduces the theme of the true end of human life by castigating the unstable routes people tend to take towards the Good, which stands in the way of a just and noble world:

> Τοῦτο τὸ πάθος ταράττει τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλατταν, τοῦτο ἀθροίζει τὰς ἐκκλησίας, τοῦτο συνάγει τὰ δικαστήρια, τοῦτο πληροῖ τὰ δεσμωτήρια, τοῦτο πήγνυσιν ναῦν, τοῦτο τριήρεις καθέλκει, τοῦτο πολέμους συνάπτει, τοῦτο ἀνεβίβασεν ἐπὶ ἵππους ἱππέας, ἐπὶ ἅρματα ἡνιόχους, ἐπὶ ἀκρόπολιν τυράννους.
>
> It is this experience[117] [viz. the human inability to achieve the Good] that makes chaos of land and sea, it is this that packs the Assembly and convenes the courts, this that fills the prisons and builds navies and launches triremes, this that starts wars and mounts the cavalry on their horses and the charioteers on their chariots and installs tyrants on the Acropolis.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 29.6

117 Trapp (1997a), 243 translates πάθος as a plural form, which does not significantly affect the sense of the sentence.

Yet there is also a nuance in Maximus' conception of jurisdiction. After all, by arguing that the courts exist as a consequence of the unstable nature of the human race, he leaves open the possibility of an ideal society in which matters can be settled at once and do not need reaffirmation by individual courts. The idea of such an ideal society in which philosophers rule in an authoritative but righteous fashion pervades the philosophical tradition, with Plato's ideal state (discussed in his *Republic*) as the most obvious representative. Maximus seems to have a similar conception of philosophy in mind:

> Φέρε δή, νομοθέτου δίκην παρίτω φιλοσοφία, ψυχὴν ἄτακτον καὶ πλανωμένην κοσμήσουσα, καθάπερ δῆμον.
>
> Come, let Philosophy step forward in the character of a law-maker, bringing order to a disorganized and erring soul as if to a people.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 37.3

Maximus' conception of philosophy as a ruling and lawgiving institution seems to justify his practice of introducing forensic tropes in his speeches, in that his deliberations can henceforth be taken as philosophy's truthful answer to whichever moral question poses itself. By establishing a close connection between legal practices in court and the philosophical practice of lawgiving, he can advertise his philosophical preaching as an instructive demonstration for those who are familiar with and interested in forensic pursuits, as he does in his first oration.[118] However, if Maximus wants to depict himself as a credible philosophical speaker, he somehow needs to distinguish himself from mere forensic speakers who lend their voice to one side of the debate, and who are not necessarily interested in the truth. It should not surprise, therefore, that Maximus clearly points out that his deliberations are in need of a court more supreme than those that settle ordinary human cases:

> Χαλεπὸν εὑρεῖν λόγον ἀληθῆ· κινδυνεύει γὰρ ἡ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ψυχή, δι' εὐπορίαν τοῦ φρονεῖν, τοῦ κρίνειν ἀπορεῖν. Καὶ αἱ μὲν ἄλλαι τέχναι, πρόσω ἰοῦσαι, κατὰ τὴν εὕρεσιν εὐστοχώτεραι γίγνονται, ἑκάστη περὶ τὰ αὑτῆς ἔργα· φιλοσοφία δέ, ἐπειδὰν αὑτῆς εὐπορώτατα ἔχῃ, τότε μάλιστα ἐμπίμπλαται λόγων ἀντιστασίων καὶ ἰσορρόπων, καὶ ἔοικεν γεωργῷ, ἐπειδὰν ἐν περιουσίᾳ γένηται, ὀργάνων πολλῶν, ἀκαρποτέρᾳ τῇ γῇ χρωμένῳ. Τὰς μὲν οὖν πολιτικὰς διαδικασίας εὐθύνει ψῆφος καὶ ἀριθμὸς δικαστῶν, καὶ γνώμη ῥήτορος, καὶ δήμου χεῖρες· ἐνταῦθα

118 Max. *Or.* 1.7.

> δὲ τίς ἡμῖν παρέσται δικαστής, καὶ τίνι ψήφῳ τἀληθὲς κρινοῦμεν; Λόγῳ; Ἀλλ' οὐκ ἂν ἔχοις εἰπεῖν λόγον ὅτῳ οὐκ ἂν ἐξεύροις τὸν ἐναντίον. Πάθει; Ἀλλ' ἄπιστος ὁ δικαστής. Πλήθει; Ἀλλὰ πλείους οἱ ἀμαθέστεροι. Δόξῃ; Ἀλλὰ τὰ χείρω ἐνδοξότερα.
>
> It is difficult to find a true account. The risk is that through an overabundance of thoughts the human soul will cease to be able to exercise discrimination. Other sciences as they develop acquire a surer aim for the making of further discoveries, each in its own particular sphere; but when Philosophy reaches its peak of inventiveness, it is then that it is overwhelmed by equally balanced and countervailing arguments. It is like a farmer who, when the quantity of his implements runs into superfluity, finds himself getting a smaller return from his land. Political disputes are settled by casting votes, and by a head-count of the jurors, and the wit of the orator, and by the hands of the people; but in our case who will sit as juror for us, and by what process of voting will we decide on the truth? Reasoned argument? But there is no argument you can give me to which an answer cannot be found. Emotional response? An untrustworthy juror! A majority vote? The majority are fools. Reputation? It is inferior things that enjoy the higher reputation.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 33.1

Maximus uses this juridical metaphor to determine who would qualify for making truthful assessments concerning human life. Through the rejection of a couple of criteria, such as reasoned argument, emotion, majority vote, and reputation, we can already define Maximus' ideal judge as not being occupied with conflicting opinions, not engaging in destabilizing emotions, not listening to the opinion of the masses, and not being deceived by mere appearance.

But, to repeat Maximus' question, who *can* qualify as a judge about these matters? One could suspect that Maximus, who does not shy away from delivering *dissoi logoi* concerning philosophical topics, does not aim to be seen as a judge himself. And yet exactly the opposite is true. Through a cunning display of different personae, Maximus still affirms his own distinctive position as a judge in the physical and ethical matters discussed. How this interplay of personae is to be understood appears most clearly from Maximus' sixteenth oration in defence of the contemplative life, which also contains a concluding summary that frames the entire debate, and shows that Maximus' previous commitment to the defence of the active life in the fifteenth oration is only a pose that can easily be turned into an opposite argumentation. Interestingly, after having made his case in favour of the contemplative life (through

an impersonation of the philosopher Anaxagoras), Maximus appears to place himself outside the debate in order to give a neutral—as it were—evaluation of the dilemma at hand. In the process, the evocation of the forensic context in which the impersonated Anaxagoras made his case inspires Maximus to elaborate on this conceptual metaphor, and ask again for a judge who can ultimately give a true and unbiased judgement.

> Ταῦτα λέγοντος καὶ ἀπολογιζομένου τοῦ Ἀναξαγόρου, γελάσονται, ὡς τὸ εἰκός, οἱ Κλαζομένιοι· οὐ γὰρ δὴ πιθανώτερός γε δόξει εἶναι τῆς γραφῆς, ἀληθῆ δὲ οὐδὲν ἧττον αὐτῷ λελέξεται κἂν ἐκεῖνοι καταψηφίσωνται. Εἰ δέ πού τις οἷος δικαστοῦ χώραν ἔχειν μὴ κυάμῳ λαχόντος, ἀλλ’, ἥπερ δὴ χειροτονία δικαστοῦ μόνη, *αὐτῷ τῷ εἰδέναι*, πρὸς τοῦτον οὐχ ὡς ἀδικῶν, οὐδ’ ὡς φεύγων γραφήν, ἀπολογεῖται εἴτε Ἀναξαγόρας ἐν Κλαζομεναῖς, εἴτε ἐν Ἐφέσῳ Ἡράκλειτος, εἴτε ἐν Σάμῳ Πυθαγόρας, εἴτε ἐν Ἀβδήροις Δημόκριτος, εἴτε ἐν Κολοφῶνι Ξενοφάνης, εἴτε ἐν Ἐλέᾳ Παρμενίδης, εἴτε ἐν Ἀπολλωνίᾳ Διογένης, εἴτε τις ἄλλος τῶν δαιμονίων ἐκείνων ἀνδρῶν, ἀλλ’ ἐξ ἰσοτιμίας οὑτωσὶ πείθων καὶ διαλεγόμενος, συνετὰ συνετοῖς λέγων, καὶ πιστὰ πιστοῖς, καὶ ἔνθεα ἐνθέοις.
>
> If Anaxagoras says this in his own defence, the people of Clazomenae, in all probability, will laugh at him. They will not think his case more persuasive than the charges brought against him, yet he will none the less have told them the truth, even if they condemn him. But what if we could find someone able to play the part of the kind of juror who is chosen not by lot, but by the only true criterion for electing a juror, real knowledge? And what if he were to hear a plea that did not assume any prior wrongdoing, or any need to defend a case at law, whether from Anaxagoras in Clazomenae, or Heraclitus in Ephesus, or Pythagoras on Samos, or Democritus in Abdera, or Xenophanes in Colophon, or Parmenides in Elea, or Diogenes in Apollonia, or from any other of those inspired individuals, but rather a case made by someone speaking as if to his equals and attempting to persuade them by philosophical dialectic, speaking words of insight to the insightful, words worthy of trust to the trustworthy, words of inspiration to the inspired?
>
> MAX. *Or.* 16.4

The fact that Maximus goes on to present his own solution to the dilemma basically proves that he finds himself capable of being the juror he discusses here. Maximus' performance of two opposing views thus does not prevent him from passing his own judgement, which is presented as a true and self-confident answer. It is as if his previous personae defending opposing viewpoints (among

whom the impersonated Anaxagoras) are staged as two lawyers in a heated debate about which one insightful individual—yet another Maximean persona—ought to make the correct evaluation. The whole issue, spread out over two *dialexeis*, thus seems to boil down to a communicational model in which the speaker presents all types of arguments against or in favour of the contemplative life, and then passes on a judgement that can be trusted as authentic because of the speaker's sublime knowledge of the matter (cf. αὐτῷ τῷ εἰδέναι), which is demonstrated by his capability to come up with a convincing argumentation from both sides of the debate.

We can only guess as to why the fifteenth and the sixteenth orations are, in fact, the only *dissoi logoi* that receive such a thorough evaluation, in which Maximus' own opinion seems to come to the surface. It is quite obvious, though, that the dilemma between the active and the contemplative life is far more important for Maximus' self-presentation as a philosopher than, for instance, the question whether the life of a soldier is preferable to that of a farmer. Under close scrutiny, Maximus seems to advertise the contemplative life to his audience, but neither without also valuing the merits of the active life,[119] nor without smuggling some aspects, which one may typically associate with the active life, into his definition of the contemplative life.[120] In so doing, he seems to give his audience an answer that conforms itself to traditional philosophical standards, but that presents itself as a fairly attainable model in terms of effort and commitment.

Quite interestingly, in the previous excerpt, Maximus does not only talk about one knowledgeable juror, but also about a public of peers ready to acknowledge the truthfulness of the reasoning conducted (this in contrast to Anaxagoras, whose words would have fallen on deaf ears as a result of the public's lack of philosophical insight). Indirectly, this statement fulfils the function of a *captatio benevolentiae* towards Maximus' audience, in that they should feel themselves encouraged to fulfil the role of this insightful public. Once again, the dynamics of distinction do not only promote Maximus' own position as a philosophical speaker, but are also part of a protreptic speech act designed so as to provoke the audience's willingness to approve of Maximus' argumentation.

119 See, e.g., his reassuring discourse that one must do whatever one's nature, age and situation demands in *Or.* 16.5. When we accept the model audience to be a public of youngsters, these remarks become all the more purposeful.

120 See the analysis of Anaxagoras' speech in Lauwers—Roskam (2012).

Quite a similar strategy can be found in the third oration, in which Maximus explains why Socrates did not bother to defend himself in front of the Athenian council.[121] The subject is very typical of Maximus' overall approach, as he does acknowledge that Socrates' silence was a sublime philosophical form of conduct in front of a public of ordinary jurors, but at the same time seizes the occasion to deliver a verbal defence of Socrates' philosophical conduct.

> Ποῦ γὰρ Ἀθηναίοις συνιέναι τί μὲν διαφθορὰ νέων, τί δὲ ἀρετή;[122] Καὶ τί μὲν τὸ δαιμόνιον, πῶς δὲ τιμητέον; Οὐ φὰρ τῷ κυάμῳ λαχόντες δικασταὶ χίλιοι ταῦτα ἐξετάζουσιν, οὐδὲ Σόλων τι ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν γέγραφεν, οὐδὲ οἱ Δράκοντος σεμνοὶ νόμοι· ἀλλὰ κλήσεις μέν, καὶ φάσεις, καὶ γραφαί, καὶ εὔθυναι, καὶ ἀντωμοσίαι, καὶ πάντα τὰ τοιαῦτα ἐν ἡλιαίᾳ εὐθύνεται ὥσπερ ἐν ταῖς τῶν παίδων ἀγέλαις αἱ περὶ τῶν ἀστραγάλων διαμάχαι καὶ ῥητορικαί,[123] ἀφαιρουμένων ἀλλήλους, καὶ ἀδικούντων, καὶ ἀδικουμένων· ἀλήθεια δὲ καὶ ἀρετὴ καὶ βίος ὀρθὸς ἑτέρων δικαστῶν δεῖται, καὶ νόμων ἑτέρων, καὶ ῥητόρων ἑτέρων, ἐν οἷς Σωκράτης ἐκράτει, καὶ ἐστεφανοῦτο, καὶ εὐδοκίμει.
>
> How were the Athenians to understand what counted as corruption of the young and what as virtue? Or what his divine mentor was and how it ought to be worshipped? These are not matters to be dealt with by a thousand jurors chosen by lot, nor did Solon draft any measure relating to them, nor did Dracon's revered laws take them into account. Summonses and denunciations and indictments and prosecutions and judicial reviews and affidavits and all such things are dealt with in the Heliaia, like the squabbles that arise in gangs of children over knuckle-bones, when they steal from each other, doing each other down and being done down in return. But truth and virtue and a life of rectitude demand other jurors and other laws and other orators, of the kind among whom Socrates won his victories and his wreaths and his reputation.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 3.5

121 Another *locus* where Socrates is associated with trials and courts is Max. *Or.* 18.6. In his defence of Socrates' love, Maximus is here apparently willing to deploy a typically forensic type of argumentation, viz. making one's misdeeds smaller through comparison with notable individuals merely committing the same fault. This is in itself a good occasion for Maximus to display his knowledge of the broader field of love, as he demonstrates in the subsequent paragraphs.

122 In this sentence, there is an ellipsis of ἔχρην, which is used two sentences before.

123 These last two words are probably corrupt, according to Trapp.

The main point is that Socrates did not want to defend himself because the jurors were either too foolish to comprehend the defence, or had already understood it before Socrates would have explained (the former being the right hypothesis, as Maximus' interpretation appears to suggest). Socrates' Athenian public was thus not capable of grasping his greatness, but by explicitly pointing out the actual reason behind Socrates' silence, Maximus seems to suggest that it does make sense to defend Socrates in front of his (Maximus') *present* public (unlike Socrates before his Athenian public). In other words, in his attempt to persuade his contemporary audience to side with his 'philosophical' (instead of popular) judgement concerning Socrates' trial, Maximus relies on the listeners' apparent desire to distinguish themselves from historical jurors, who had an inferior idea of philosophical matters. It is as if Socrates' trial is once more re-enacted both for the sake of Socrates himself, in that he receives some justified retribution, and for the sake of Maximus and his audience, in that they can enjoy the feeling of being more insightful judges than the fifth-century Athenian council.

In conclusion, the forensic tropes in Maximus' orations appear to run parallel with Maximus' twofold position as an insider to the world of his audience and as an outsider who can pass judgements in an authoritative fashion, even on philosophical subjects that are already treated by traditional philosophers. While the former tendency is reflected in Maximus' eagerness to fully engage in philosophical debates and present all sorts of arguments in defence of a certain view (as a lawyer does), the latter can be detected in his attempt to provide his audience with an answer that is justified by his insightful and knowledgeable ethos, and that can henceforth be taken as the norm by which to think, live, and speak.

5 Philosophy

In placing philosophy as the final of the three fields under discussion, we have saved, at least from Maximus' perspective, the best for last. Philosophy can no doubt be seen as *the* major cornerstone of the authorization of Maximus and his *dialexeis*. How Maximus approaches this field and tries, often through innuendo, to claim his own share of philosophical authority, will be examined in this subchapter.

It will first be established that Maximus does not make a clear distinction between the field of poetry and that of philosophy, which in turn enables him to portray Homer as a prime philosopher and to embellish his orations with a large number of Homeric citations. After that, our attention will shift to Max-

imus' self-conscious interpretation of poetic and philosophical sources, his monolithic picture of the field of philosophy, and his representation of individual philosophers in the *dialexeis*. There follows a discussion of the cunning way in which Maximus portrays himself, at least on an explicit level, as a middleman, rather than as a philosopher *pur sang*. Finally, some attention will be given to Maximus' use of the traditional commonplace that a philosopher has a supreme insight regarding the divine order, and how Maximus' philosophy is generally represented as bringing about social distinction in the eyes of his public. Throughout these analyses, it will become clear how the representation of this field consistently points to an authorial discourse intentionally aimed at convincing the audience of the distinctive value of philosophy as practised in Maximus' *dialexeis*.

5.1 *Philosophy and Homeric Poetry*

To a modern eye or ear, it may seem somewhat odd to treat philosophy and poetry together in one discussion. Nevertheless, this is by far the most appropriate method, as it corresponds to Maximus' own view on poetry and philosophy. The mix of poetry and philosophy not only pervades Maximus' oeuvre quite prominently, but is also explicitly explained and defended in his work.

Maximus' fourth *dialexis* deals with the image of the gods as sketched by poets and philosophers. The Tyrian argues that there is essentially no difference between the gods of the poets and the gods of the philosophers, since poetry is nothing less than an earlier form of philosophy, and both should be regarded as equally valuable sources of wisdom:

> Καὶ γὰρ ποιητικὴ τί ἄλλο ἢ φιλοσοφία, τῷ μὲν χρόνῳ παλαιά, τῇ δὲ ἁρμονίᾳ ἔμμετρος, τῇ δὲ γνώμῃ μυθολογική; Καὶ φιλοσοφία τί ἄλλο ἢ ποιητική, τῷ μὲν χρόνῳ νεωτέρα, τῇ δὲ ἁρμονίᾳ εὐζωνοτέρα, τῇ δὲ γνώμῃ σαφεστέρα; Δύο τοίνυν πραγμάτων χρόνῳ μόνον καὶ σχήματι ἀλλήλοις διαφερομένων, πῶς ἄν τις διαιτήσαι τὴν διαφορὰν ἐν οἷς περὶ τοῦ θείου ἑκάτεροι λέγουσιν, καὶ οἱ ποιηταὶ καὶ οἱ φιλόσοφοι;
>
> What is poetry if not a more venerable form of philosophy, composed in metre and mythological in expression? What is philosophy, if not a younger form of poetry, less formal in composition and more lucid in expression? If then these two differ from each other only in age and in superficial form, how ought one to understand the difference in what the two kinds of composer—poet and philosopher—say about the gods?
>
> MAX. *Or.* 4.1

Quite unsurprisingly, poets and philosophers will eventually be found to offer the same conception of the gods. Maximus' general 'irenic' position will be discussed further on (with an illustration from this very *dialexis*).

It could be suspected that Maximus would prefer plain philosophy over poetry, as the former's message is less difficult to understand than the latter's. Yet there appears to be no lesser appreciation for the poets, because Maximus believes their words to be the most original bearers of truth. Philosophy's task has merely been to extract the truth from the poets' words and make this truth explicit, so that more people would understand the poets' message.[124]

By regarding poetry as a source of original wisdom, Maximus is able to justify why he inserts so many passages of poetry into his philosophical discussions. Far from offering an entirely different perspective on philosophical issues, these poetic passages are believed to be at the cradle of philosophical ideas themselves, and thus they are a valuable resource for the (re)construction of philosophical reasoning.[125] If Maximus considers his task philosophical, as he does, it is all the more appropriate that he returns to poetic wisdom and lets his audience benefit from his philosophical exegesis, which makes the poets' messages more straightforwardly understandable, especially for a group of non-specialized listeners. The theoretical view on poetry and philosophy as proclaimed in the fourth oration thus justifies Maximus' own practice of citing and discussing poetry in his philosophical speeches, even if this citations often seem to function as euphonious embellishments, rather than as philosophical arguments.

The authorization of poetry as a genuine source of wisdom is also quite relevant for the reconstruction of Maximus' implied audience. Since he asserts

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124 See also Max. *Or.* 38.3–4.

125 In line with Maximus' association of poetry with original thought, it must be said that apart from Homeric (and perhaps also Hesiodic) poetry, later poetic references are much less numerous and do not bear the same level of authority. It can be observed that, as in *Or.* 7.1 *On physical and mental illness*, where Ariphron of Sicyon's popular poem on health is cited by way of introduction, non-Homeric citations of poetry often stem from popular folklore (on which, see Morgan (2007), with a particular attention to Maximus on pp. 294–296). Furthermore, there often seems to be an *a priori* link between the theme of the poetic work from which the non-Homeric citation stems and the theme of the *dialexis*, as in *Or.* 14.7 *On how to distinguish a flatterer from a friend*, where Eupolis' play *Flatterers* is mentioned, and *Or.* 18.8–9 *On Socrates' love*, which is the only context in which the 'love poets' Sappho and Anacreon are discussed (Anacreon is also mentioned once more in *Or.* 21.2, still in the same erotic context). This may in fact reveal something about Maximus' method of preparation (either mentally or in a written form) for his *dialexeis*, but the instances are too few to offer any definitive conclusion.

that poetry is an excellent introduction to philosophy for young children,[126] the fact that he frequently uses poetry himself may imply that he saw himself as a communicator of philosophical values and truths to a public of relative beginners, who could use the agreeable form of poetry as a stepping-stone to philosophical truths.

By far the most venerated poet in Maximus' *dialexeis* is Homer. The *dialexeis* are amply filled with citations from, references to, and praises for the oldest Greek composer of verses.[127] In the thirty-third oration, Homer is even depicted as the voice of Zeus himself.[128] It is no surprise, therefore, that the twenty-sixth oration, which is also concerned with poetry, is entirely devoted to his work. Maximus praises Homer with his own verses (the praise Odysseus gave to the singer Demodocus), subsequently arguing that Homer's inspiration has a thoroughly philosophical flavour:

> Ὥστε ἔγωγε εἰς τὰς Ὁμήρου φωνὰς ἐμπεσὼν οὐκ ἔχω παρ' ἐμαυτοῦ τὸν ἄνδρα ἐπαινέσαι, ἀλλὰ κἀνταῦθα δεήσομαι αὐτοῦ ἐπιδοῦναί μοι τῶν ἐπῶν, ἵνα μὴ διαφθείρω τὸν ἔπαινον ψιλῷ λόγῳ·
>
> ἔξοχα δή σε βροτῶν, ὦ Ὅμηρ', αἰνίζομ' ἁπάντων,
> ἢ σέ γε Μοῦσα δίδαξε, Διὸς πάις, ἢ σέ γ' Ἀπόλλων.[129]
>
> Τὰ δὲ Μουσῶν καὶ Ἀπόλλωνος διδάγματα οὐδὲ τὴν ἀρχὴν θέμις ἄλλο τι ὑπολαβεῖν, ἢ ἀφ' ὧν ψυχὴ εἰς κόσμον καθίσταται. Τοῦτο δὲ τί ἂν εἴη ἄλλο ἢ φιλοσοφία;
>
> When I encounter Homer's stories I am quite unable to praise the man from my own resources, but yet again need him to lend me some of his verses, so as to avoid spoiling my praise by expressing it in mere prose:

126 See Max. *Or.* 4.3. Another advocate of the use of poetry in the education of young children is Plutarch (cf. esp. *Aud.Poet.*).

127 To give but a few examples, Homer is referred to as a "παλαιὸς ἀνὴρ καὶ ἀξιόχρεως δήπου πιστεύεσθαι" (*Or.* 6.4) and addressed as "ὦ ποιητῶν γενναιότατε" (*Or.* 8.5). See the general discussion of Maximus' knowledge and interpretations of the Homeric texts and his image of Homer in Kindstrand (1973), 45–71 and 163–192.

128 Max. *Or.* 33.7. See also *Or.* 38.7, where six different Homeric verses are suggested to be divine words. For Homer's reception as a source for the divine, see Lamberton (1986).

129 Cf. Hom. *Od.* 8.487–488. Of course, Maximus has changed the addressee of the verses from Demodocus to Homer, which seems to result in a metrically less elegant (and indeed incorrect!) verse.

> I praise you, Homer, before all the mortals;
> Your teacher was Zeus' daughter, the Muse, or Apollo.
>
> It is quite improper to suppose the instruction of the Muses and Apollo to be any other than that by which due order is introduced into the soul. What else could that be than Philosophy?
>
> MAX. *Or.* 26.1

Homer's philosophy as it appears from his works is discussed in the subsequent paragraphs, which demonstrate that Maximus regards Homer as a prime philosopher whose work already bears all aspects of wisdom and virtue that will be made more explicit by the philosophers of later generations. All this implies that, for Maximus, a Homeric verse is an equally (if not more) authoritative bearer of truth and wisdom as any philosophical doctrine.

The twenty-sixth oration contains a paragraph in which Maximus wants to demonstrate that Homer's philosophy is in line with Plato's, stating that Plato too was a nurseling of Homer's poetry.[130] The reconciliation between Homer and Plato, an audacious attempt in the light of Plato's *Republic*, is also the topic of his seventeenth oration concerning the place of poetry in Plato's ideal state. The issue is of course well known,[131] but it is all the more delicate for Maximus, given his great reverence for both Homer and Plato, whom he both considers proper philosophers. No wonder that his eventual answer to the question as to whether Homer should be banned from Plato's ideal state is as diplomatic as it is trivial. Plato, Maximus asserts, described an *ideal* state, not a concrete or realistic society. Therefore, Plato could postulate that no poetry was needed in his state for the citizens to live well. However, since such an ideal state does not exist, poets do have an important function in human communities. This argument enables Maximus to praise Homer for his concrete value, without criticizing Plato for banning poets from his ideal state. Furthermore, far from denying that Homer's verses give a certain amount of pleasure, Maximus vigorously condemns people who believe that Homer's only merits are to be situated in his pleasurable phrases. The essentially virtuous nature of Homer's poetry, which is in itself a kind of philosophy, must not be doubted.

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130 Max. *Or.* 26.3.

131 See Weinstock (1926).

5.2 *Interpretation and Allegory*

On the basis of many scholarly judgements about Maximus, one would be tempted to think that his dealing with philosophical and poetic material is entirely stripped from personal involvement and merely repeats the voices of tradition in each and every instance. A confrontation between these assumptions and the actual *dialexeis* teaches us that this naive picture of Maximus is simply not true. While Maximus cites a great number of poetic verses and philosophical examples to press his points home, he does not always follow the sense of the original text or reasoning as blindly as is often believed. One example of such a tendentious interpretation, illustrative of many other instances, can be found in Maximus' thirteenth oration:

> Οἶκος οὗτος εἷς θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρώπων, οὐρανὸς καὶ γῆ, δυοῖν ἑστία ἢ ὀχήματα ἀθάνατα.[132] Ὧν τὸν μὲν νέμονται θεοὶ καὶ θεῶν παῖδες, τὴν δὲ ὑποφῆται θεῶν, ἄνθρωποι, οὐ 'χαμαιεῦναι', καθ' Ὅμηρον, οὐδὲ 'ἀνιπτόποδες',[133] ἀλλὰ ἄνω, εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν, ὁρῶντες ὀρθῇ τῇ ψυχῇ, καὶ ἀνηρτημένοι τῇ γνώμῃ πρὸς τὸν Δία.
>
> Heaven and earth, immortal hearth or vehicles for two kinds of being, form this single shared household of gods and men. The former is the abode of the gods and the children of the gods; the latter is home to men, the gods' interpreters, who are not, as Homer has it, 'sleepers on the ground, with unwashed feet', but look towards the heavens with upright spirits and acknowledge the dependence of their intellects on Zeus.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 13.6

Without much ado, Homer is swiftly refuted by Maximus' own reasoning. At the same time, however, Maximus demonstrates his knowledge of the Homeric passage concerning the gods' interpreters and proves himself capable of reproducing the most important words, which establishes his image as a *pepaideumenos*. Cases such as this illustrate that, far from being entirely submissive to the powerful voice of tradition, Maximus ultimately decides how the reasoning ought to be conducted, even if this implies that the authoritative voices of traditional poets and philosophers need to be put aside.

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132 Apart from the deletion of τά before ἀθάνατα (a suggestion by Markland followed by Trapp), it appears that this manuscript reading, as given by Koniaris, actually makes sense. Acciaiolus' reading ἑστίαι (followed in Trapp's translation) is probably the smoothest solution, but it is entirely possible that the singular form corresponds to the original text; hence my small modification in the translation.

133 Cf. Hom. *Il.* 16.234–235.

Furthermore, there are strategies established within the philosophical tradition that help Maximus make a connection between his own viewpoints and the authorities from the past. Probably the most important of these is the use of allegory, an interpretative method that was, by the Imperial era, already long regarded as a valid philosophical mode of interpreting poetic texts.[134] Maximus himself defends his allegorical readings most clearly and extensively in his fourth oration:[135]

> Τί γὰρ ἂν ἄλλο εἴη μύθου χρεία ἢ λόγος περισκεπὴς ἑτέρῳ κόσμῳ, καθάπερ τὰ ἱδρύματα, οἷς περιέβαλον οἱ τελεσταὶ χρυσὸν καὶ ἄργυρον καὶ πέπλους, ἀποσεμνύνοντες αὐτῶν τὴν προσδοκίαν; Θρασεῖα γὰρ οὖσα ἡ ἀνθρωπίνη ψυχὴ τὰ μὲν ἐν ποσὶν ἧσσον τιμᾷ, τοῦ δὲ ἀπόντος θαυμαστικῶς ἔχει· καταμαντευομένη δὲ τῶν οὐχ ὁρωμένων, καὶ θηρεύουσα ταῦτα τοῖς λογισμοῖς, μὴ τυχοῦσα μὲν σπεύδει ἀνευρεῖν, τυχοῦσα δὲ ἀγαπᾷ ὡς ἑαυτῆς ἔργον. Τοῦτο τοίνυν οἱ ποιηταὶ κατανοήσαντες, ἐξεῦρον ἐπ' αὐτῇ μηχανὴν ἐν τοῖς θείοις λόγοις, μύθους λόγου μὲν ἀφανεστέρους, αἰνίγματος δὲ σαφεστέρους, διὰ μέσου ὄντας ἐπιστήμης πρὸς ἄγνοιαν· κατὰ μὲν τὸ ἡδὺ πιστευομένους, κατὰ δὲ τὸ παράδοξον ἀπιστουμένους καὶ χειραγωγοῦντας τὴν ψυχὴν ἐπὶ τὸ ζητεῖν τὰ ὄντα καὶ διερευνᾶσθαι περαιτέρω. Ἔλαθον μέχρι πλείστου οἱ ἄνδρες οὗτοι ἐπιβουλεύσαντες ἡμῶν ταῖς ἀκοαῖς, φιλόσοφοι μὲν ὄντες, ποιηταὶ δὲ καλούμενοι, ἀλλαξάμενοι χρήματος ἐπιφθόνου δημοτερπῆ τέχνην.
>
> What else is the point of a myth? It is a doctrine concealed beneath adornments of a different kind, like the statues that priests of the mysteries have clothed in gold and silver and robes, so as to make their appearance the more impressive. Given the boldness of its nature, the human soul tends to think little of what is close to hand, while it admires what is distant. Divining what it cannot actually see, it tries to hunt it out by the power of reason; failure simply intensifies its keenness in the chase, while success means that it loves what it has found as if it were its own handiwork. It was their realization of this truth that led the poets to invent the device by which they play on the soul in their discussions of the gods: namely, the use of myths, that are less clear than explicit doctrine, yet more lucid than riddles, and occupy the middle ground between rational knowledge

134 See, for instance, the entire book of allegorical readings of Homer by the probably first-century (CE) Stoic Heraclitus, the Pseudo-Plutarchan work *On the life and poetry of Homer*, and the first-century (CE) interpreter Cornutus' *Summary of Greek theology*.

135 See also, e.g., Max. *Or.* 18.5; 26.5–9; 34.3.

> and ignorance. Trusted because of the pleasure they give, yet mistrusted because of their paradoxical content, they guide the soul to search for the truth and to investigate more deeply. What has for the most part gone unnoticed is that these men, with their cunning designs on our attention, are really philosophers. They may be called poets, but that is only because they have accepted a reputation for crowd-pleasing skill in place of one for something less congenial.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 4.5–6

Quite tellingly, according to Maximus' description, allegory is not so much a method of *reading* as a literary device invented by *composers* of poems to point to a more profound truth beneath their narrations. By presenting the allegory as a natural interpretation of the original authorial intention by 'the soul', rather than as a subjective intervention by the interpreter, Maximus is able to present himself as a neutral exegete of Homeric wisdom. In the allegorical reading, the subjective mediation of the interpreter is thus dissimulated to the extent that the responsibility for the philosophical message within the poetic text is entirely attributed to the conscious intention of the original author. The allegorist thus claims to offer an indisputable insight into the intentional meaning of the original text. Through this process, the allegorical meaning as communicated by the interpreter receives the objectified authority of the original poet.[136]

In order for this authorization to be successful, Maximus needs to rely on two beliefs in his audience: 1) that the Homeric world has basically remained unchanged since the original composition of the poem (otherwise, it would be impossible to claim that Homer already intended the meaning explained by Maximus to his audience), and 2) that Maximus is in fact capable of obtaining Homer's original intention behind the literary form of his poems, as if the poetic text alone suffices to reach a firm and unambiguous interpretation of the original message as composed by the author.

The first premise also underlies Maximus' broader project of reflecting on moral and physical issues through the use of classical philosophical and other sources. Virtues are believed to have a stable and unchangeable character, so

136 Cf. Lamberton (1986), 15: "The need to articulate the truth thought to be contained in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* can be traced to two primary motives: the desire of the interpreters to use the prestige of the Homeric poems to support their own views and the desire to defend Homer against his detractors." As may become clear from my analysis, I believe that for Maximus the former motive is stronger than the latter.

that they can be acquired through the imitation of ancient models such as Socrates. This philosophical belief in the stable nature of virtues thus legitimizes the study of Homer's text as a resource for the reconstruction of ancient virtuous behaviour that can be translated to a present situation. Moreover, guided by his pessimistic views on the degenerative development of human culture, Maximus not only presents himself as a vigorous *laudator temporis acti*, but also seems to want to take himself and his audience back to the time in which the great poetic works took place, or were composed. More often than not, we find direct apostrophes of literary figures or composers, which psychologically reduce the time gap between the illustrious past and Maximus' present.[137] All this gives the impression that Maximus performs in a past world, making use of a frame of reference that predates his own era. Maximus also explicitly expresses his wish to return to Greece's classical age, when his greatest models flourished:

> Εἴθε μοι καὶ τὸ Ἀριστείδου γένος ἦν Ἀθήνησιν, εἴθε τὸ Σωκράτους· ἐτίμησα ἂν τούτους ὡς Ἡρακλείδας, ὡς Περσείδας, ὡς Εὐπατρίδας.
>
> Would that I could have seen the stock of Aristides, of Socrates, in Athens! I would have honoured them like Heraclids, like Perseids, like Eupatrids.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 40.6

The only way to at least mentally return to these illustrious times is by cultivating a morality based on these canonical texts and figures, driven by the conviction that morality as it was practised back then still offers a firm basis for virtuous behaviour in Imperial times.

The second premise, Maximus' ability to stand in a connection of kinship with Homer's creative genius, concerns the ethos of the philosophical speaker, in that Maximus' credibility depends on the extent to which he can make his audience believe that this bond of kinship with Homer truly exists. Since Maximus stands in a long tradition of allegorical interpreters, his personal allegorical interpretations should best be in line with previous attempts at meaningful interpretations by his predecessors, for otherwise the objectivity of the allegorical reading may be jeopardized. Hence the existence of more or less conventional allegories such as Maximus' treatment of the Homeric lotus as an

137 An example of this is offered in my analysis of Maximus' discussion of a Homeric passage in oration 22 (see 7.1).

allegory for idle pleasure,[138] a view that found wide support in philosophical circles (apart from, of course, the Epicureans).

In the seventh subchapter, we shall see another excerpt in which Maximus gives an extensive allegorical interpretation of a Homeric passage, and we shall contrast Maximus' offhand response to the interpretative problem with other treatments of the matter by other allegorizing interpreters.

5.3 *Irenic Ideas: Numerous Allies, One Adversary*

Above we have already noted that Maximus saw no essential difference between poetry and philosophy. Near the end of his fourth oration, he also makes it clear how both these fields of wisdom should be treated.

> Μὴ τοίνυν ἔρῃ πότεροι κρεῖττον περὶ θεῶν διειλήφασιν, ποιηταὶ ἢ φιλόσοφοι, ἀλλὰ σπονδὰς καὶ ἐκεχειρίαν τοῖς ἐπιτηδεύμασιν ποιησάμενος, ὡς περὶ μιᾶς καὶ ὁμοφώνου τέχνης σκόπει· κἂν γὰρ ποιητὴν καλῇς, φιλόσοφον λέγεις, καὶ ἂν φιλόσοφον καλῇς, ποιητὴν λέγεις.
>
> So do not ask whether it is the poets or the philosophers who have produced the better account of the gods. Call a truce and arrange a ceasefire between these pursuits, for it is in fact about just the one single and coherent art that you are enquiring. If you use the name 'poet' you are also saying 'philosopher'; if you use the name 'philosopher' you are also saying 'poet'.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 4.7

Maximus' 'peaceful' vocabulary in this passage is quite characteristic of his general approach to philosophy: far from searching for polemical oppositions in order to present himself as a distinguished member of a certain philosophical school, he represents the field of philosophy as if it contains but one univocal message that can equally well be extracted from a Homeric verse as from an historical example by Herodotus, or a passage from a Platonic dialogue. Therefore, Maximus generally avoids emphasizing doctrinal differences or polemical conflicts between individual thinkers or philosophical schools. This tendency goes so far that there is probably not one single reference to a contemporary philosophical school in Maximus' discourse.[139] Accordingly, the many techni-

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138 See Max. *Or.* 14.4, with Trapp (1997a), 128 n. 8.

139 The Academy is mentioned 13 times, but never in the context of contemporary polemical debates.

cal philosophical doctrines that essentially constitute the difference between, for example, the Stoa and Platonism, are often silently put aside, which explains the overall scarcity of typically philosophical jargon in Maximus' *dialexeis* in favour of a 'common-sense' reductionist representation of contemporary philosophical debates.[140]

This so-called 'irenic'[141] position fits in well with the communicational situation we already reconstructed. If Maximus saw himself as someone introducing less knowledgeable people into the world of philosophy, his representation of philosophical doctrines as merely shared by all philosophers must have had a more reassuring effect on his audience than an historically more correct account of the divergent field of philosophical viewpoints. Moreover, if we accept that the *dialexeis* could also be used as resources for imitation and reproduction, Maximus' irenic ideas may have corresponded with the common-sense perception of philosophical discussions outside the strict realm of technical philosophy, which must have enabled cultivated individuals to make a good impression as connoisseurs of the field of philosophy in front of a public of non-specialists, just like Maximus himself does.

Moreover, the irenic pose also promotes Maximus' own authority. In reducing the actual complexity of the field of philosophy, he creates the impression that his viewpoints are supported by (almost) the entire tradition. By suggesting that philosophers all embrace one stable truth, he can present himself as a 'natural' possessor of this one truth through his thorough knowledge of the philosophical tradition. Maximus' self-assured irenic discourse thus supports his construction of authority through a wide variety of philosophical, historical, poetic, and other references.

140 See Trapp (1997a), xxx–xxxi.

141 Others may label Maximus' discussions as 'eclectic' (blending ideas from diverse philosophical schools), as they testify to Maximus' dependency on other philosophical traditions than the strictly Platonic one. There appears to be a tendency to look down upon eclectics for their lack of commitment to a certain school of thought (see, e.g., the recent contribution by Scott (2005)). See, however, the critical remarks to this offhand judgement in Donini (1988) (a historicizing contribution) and especially Dillon (1988), 104: "In fact, there is nothing at all wrong with being 'eclectic', if that means simply that one is prepared to adopt a good formulation, or a valid line of argument, from a rival school or individual and adjust one's philosophical position accordingly. In this sense, most of the great philosophers are eclectic, and eclecticism is a mark of acuteness and originality, as opposed to narrow-minded sectarianism." However, to fully and uncritically apply these latter remarks to a philosopher such as Maximus, who makes a more superficial impression, may be an abuse of Dillon's intended revaluation of the term 'eclecticism'.

There is only one conspicuous exception to Maximus' irenic stance, and this is Epicureanism. Epicurus and his followers are usually the sole victims of Maximus' polemical tirades.[142] This opposition between Maximus and Epicurus quite self-evidently follows from the fact that the basis of Epicurean doctrine—the search for rationally deliberated forms of pleasure—is thoroughly at odds with Maximus' strong belief that pleasure is a pernicious guide in the pursuit of human happiness.[143] Only in the thirty-second oration does Maximus embody a persona defending Epicurean principles, but it is strongly to be doubted that this oration reflects Maximus' actual opinion. The fact that the Tyrian is not fully committed to Epicurean doctrines may be extracted from a passage from this thirty-second oration in which Maximus explicitly states that Epicurus could make use of a self-composed story in Aesopean style, thus apparently suggesting to the public that he is only impersonating an Epicurean without supporting the latter's viewpoints.[144] This impersonation should therefore be interpreted as the speaker's attempt to cover all the relevant information concerning a certain philosophical topic, which also includes arguments and reasonings from the opposite camp. All in all, this one oration is a very meagre compensation for the general contempt for the Epicurean standpoint, and even in its undertaking to defend Epicureanism, it betrays Maximus' tendency to see a binary opposition between the pleasure-loving Epicureans and the rest of the philosophers.

From the angle of philosophical self-fashioning,[145] Maximus' polemical stance towards Epicurus facilitates the expression of his own doctrines. On numerous topics such as the gods, love, and the true purpose of life, the rejection of Epicurus' viewpoints gives Maximus the opportunity to explain and defend his own ideas. In this rejection, the rhetorical power of Maximus' irenic representation of the philosophical field manifests itself. Epicurus is generally isolated from the group of 'good' philosophers who, according to Maximus, defend one single truth. Epicurus' philosophy is thus considered a violation of proper philosophical thought. By marginalizing Epicurus' doctrines, Maximus adds to the persuasiveness of his own ideas, which are represented as the truth defended by all other individual thinkers and philosophical schools.

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142 See, e.g., Max. *Or.* 4.4; 4.8; 11.5; 15.8; 19.3; 33.2; 41.2.

143 In Max. *Or.* 24.4, Maximus even speaks of "Μέγιστον ἀνθρώπῳ κακὸν ἐπιθυμία".

144 See Max. *Or.* 32.2.

145 The idea that self-fashioning takes place in the encounter between an authority and an alien underlies one of the most pivotal books of the New Historicist movement, viz. Greenblatt (1980).

5.4 *Philosophers in Maximus*[146]

In the subchapter about sophistry, we discussed how Maximus discursively condenses the first sophistic movement to such a degree that it has become no more than a couple of quick associations, and how he thus largely passes over the intellectual challenges which it posed for the field of philosophy. This offhand method, reducing people to one-dimensional characters rather than complex thinkers in their own right, is quite symptomatic of Maximus' overall treatment of philosophers as well. A couple of notable exceptions notwithstanding, the field of philosophy undergoes a notable reduction through Maximus' swift mediation.

The Presocratics are quoted a number of times in the same fashion as the sophists. Thales,[147] Anaximenes,[148] Empedocles,[149] and Leucippus[150] are criticised, whereas Xenophanes[151] and Parmenides[152] are appreciated. Heraclitus[153] and Democritus,[154] finally, are mentioned both in a positive and in a negative context. It is quite typical that, as with the first generation of sophists, most of these Presocratic thinkers are referred to in clusters, as if a mention of one Presocratic immediately triggers a reference to another one, each with a very characteristic aspect of his respective doctrine. These few passages usually contain a general evaluation of the Presocratics' philosophy, although this is never based on detailed discussion. They are important, however, because they *suggest* a thorough familiarity with Presocratic thinking. Maximus feels perfectly able to define his position towards these philosophers and to pass his judgement on their achievements on the basis of his own philosophical beliefs. In that sense, the Presocratics can receive a place in his own philosophical universe.

Of the people following in Socrates' footsteps, the Socratic Aeschines is only recorded in relation to his master,[155] while Xenophon not only serves as a Socratic source,[156] but also receives commendation for his active life alongside

146 For this section, I am partly relying on earlier work presented in Lauwers—Roskam (2012).
147 Max. *Or.* 26.2; 29.7.
148 Max. *Or.* 26.2.
149 Max. *Or.* 26.2.
150 Max. *Or.* 11.5.
151 Max. *Or.* 16.4; 26.5.
152 Max. *Or.* 16.4; 26.5.
153 Max. *Or.* 4.4; 16.4; 26.2; 29.7; 41.4.
154 Max. *Or.* 11.5; 16.4.
155 Max. *Or.* 1.9; 18.5; 22.6.
156 Max. *Or.* 18.5; 22.6.

his philosophy,[157] and is further, more or less in the same vein, associated with his military career.[158] Yet Maximus' overall picture of Xenophon comes nowhere near the versatile and programmatic importance he has for Arrian.

We now immediately jump over to the post-Platonic philosophers, only to acknowledge that they are hardly ever discussed in Maximus' work. The later Academic tradition is almost completely ignored,[159] just as Aristotle,[160] the Peripatetics,[161] and the Stoics.[162] This strikingly illustrates Maximus' radical process of selection, and his notable tendency of clustering references, this time in the fourth, sixteenth, and twenty-sixth oration. Despite Maximus' own partial indebtedness to some of these schools' arguments and orientations,[163] some detailed attention to any of these schools' doctrinal position was probably not reconcilable with Maximus' ideal, proclaimed in the first oration,[164] of a type of philosophy that does not lose itself in 'sophistic' quibbling over futile details. We have already come across yet another motive for not including specific references to the Hellenistic schools in the form of Maximus' tendency toward irenically portraying the field of philosophy as a uniform and monolithic institution. This tendency explains at the same time why Epicurus and his followers, who fall outside of this model, quite paradoxically receive more references than the philosophies of which Maximus does seem to approve.

It seems as if only a very limited number of philosophers do receive a degree of attention that goes beyond mere namedropping. The others rather seem to be there to bestow some vague philosophical aura on the *dialexeis* to infuse it with thoroughly inspiring ideas. While closely resembling the rhetorical exercises of the *chreia* and the *gnômê*, of which, respectively, an anecdote about or a saying of a wise man is used as a quick authorization and demonstration of the speaker's learning, this reduction is in itself quite revealing for the eventual purpose of the *dialexeis*, and will be discussed as such under the appropriate heading below.

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157 In Max. *Or.* 1.10, his philosophical guise is described as a breastplate and a shield, and his typical practice as that of persuasion. See also Max. *Or.* 16.5.

158 Max. *Or.* 6.3; 15.9; 22.5; 34.9; 36.6.

159 Only Carneades (*Or.* 29.7) and Clitomachus (*Or.* 4.3) are mentioned once.

160 Max. *Or.* 4.3; 27.5.

161 Max. *Or.* 11.5 on Straton.

162 Max. *Or.* 4.3 on Chrysippus.

163 On the level of doctrinal orientation, however, Maximus was no doubt influenced by Stoic and Peripatetic doctrine; cf., e.g., Puiggali (1983), 574 and Trapp (1997a), xxviii–xxix; see also Trapp (1997b), 1948.

164 See Max. *Or.* 1.8.

Who, then, escapes from Maximus' offhand grinder, through which he pushes an easily digestible form of philosophy to which the main part of the traditional philosophers are discursively made to conform themselves? In the first place, there is obviously Homer, who is granted the most original voice in philosophical thinking. Which place poetry and Homer occupy in Maximus' *dialexeis*, however, is already discussed above.

A special role is also reserved for Pythagoras. Every aspect of his conduct and doctrines appears as particularly solemn. His doctrines deal with sublime subjects,[165] his outward conduct was especially dignified (he was clothed in purple),[166] his words were brief but overawed his audience,[167] and the uninterrupted sequence of his deeds never allowed his soul to remain idle.[168] He was, as it were, in close touch with the gods.[169] The great authority attributed by Maximus to philosophy reflects back upon its founding father, and his authority accordingly reflects back upon philosophy itself.[170] In that sense, it is not really surprising that Maximus' Pythagoras would better qualify as a perfect sage than as a philosopher. After all, there is no mention of his mathematical and cosmological theories, and the remarkable prescriptions at his school apparently deserve no extensive discussion in the *dialexeis*. It should therefore be concluded that even Pythagoras is primarily included in Maximus' philosophical repertoire to authorize rather than to thoroughly inform the Tyrian's discussions.

A more exemplary treatment, especially with regard to his action, is reserved for Socrates. The name of the great Athenian philosopher occurs in no less than 25 orations, and is quite consistently used in a positive, exemplary manner.[171] Even here, however, there is little to no attention, from Maximus' part, paid to Socrates' doctrinal points, such as his programmatic use of the dialogue, his quest for definitions, his method of induction, his performance of ignorance, and his paradoxes. What really counts for Maximus is Socrates' exemplary actions throughout his life, which ought to be imitated by those who aspire to become philosophers themselves. As a result, the Athenian is named quite

165 Such as the immortality of the soul (Max. *Or.* 10.2), the sun god (19.3) and the harmony of the spheres (37.5); cf. also 10.3; 10.5; 27.5.

166 Max. *Or.* 1.10.

167 Max. *Or.* 1.10; 25.2.

168 Max. *Or.* 25.2.

169 Max. *Or.* 5.8; 8.8; 16.4.

170 On Pythagoras as the inventor of the term 'philosophy', see Max. *Or.* 1.2.

171 See the three case studies in Szarmach (1984).

often for his various contributions to the field of philosophy in what have later become Platonic commonplaces, but he is honoured even more for his virtuous behaviour. Like many of his contemporaries, Maximus is primarily interested in the *exemplum Socratis*,[172] which could easily be reconciled with his own high ethical ideals.

Of course, Socrates' dialogues, as recorded in Plato and others, distributed some obvious wisdom that can be taken as the basis for doctrinal instruction. However, in line with Maximus' own rhetorical aspirations, Socrates is even more important for the Tyrian because of the fact that he displayed some actions throughout his life for which he *did not* give a thorough and assertive explanation. Socrates' life was full of paradoxes that leave the door open for a thorough philosophical inquiry, either through a solemn process of speculation or, as is the case for Maximus, through a forceful exposition by a self-confident orator. Throughout Maximus' treatment of these Socratic actions, he pictures the exemplary behaviour of a prototypical philosopher *and* he provides an eloquent rationale where Socrates' himself did not want or was not able to legitimize himself, thus at the same time defending an authoritative philosophical figure and underscoring his own philosophical knowledge.

Maximus' third oration deals with the question as to why Socrates did not defend himself in court. While Maximus initially recognizes the correctness of Socrates' behaviour, he apparently goes on to defend Socrates' silence for some eight long paragraphs. It is quite remarkable that Maximus ignores the obvious existence of Socrates' *Apology*, but there are some indications that the *Apology* was, in Imperial times, seen as an invention of Plato rather than as Socrates' own words,[173] so that the work may not bear the authority of Plato's master, but still of Plato himself (which would also explain why Maximus could apparently affirmatively refer to passages from the *Apology*[174] while maintaining that Socrates never delivered a self-defence in the first place).

172 On the (later) ancient reception of Socrates in general, see, e.g., Döring (1979); Trapp (2007c); Wilson (2007).

173 Cf. D.H. *Dem.* 23: "There is one forensic speech by Plato, the *Apology of Socrates*; but this never saw even the threshold of a law-court or an open assembly, but was written for another purpose and belongs to the category neither of oratory nor of dialogue" (transl.: S. Usher); and probably also Arist. 28.82, where Aristides seems to admit in an impersonated remark that Socrates did not perform his own *Apology* as we possess it. See also (Th.) Gomperz (1909), (H.) Gomperz (1936), and Oldfather (1938).

174 See, e.g., the allusions to the *Apology* in the description of Socrates' trial in Max. *Or.* 18.6.

Another aspect that has raised Maximus' interest—as well as the interest of a fairly large number of ancient philosophers[175]—is the status of Socrates' *daimonion* as a predictive aid, treated in the eighth and the ninth orations. It must be said, however, that Maximus develops the subject of Socrates' *daimonion* gradually into a more general discussion of the status and the place of *daimones* in the world. It thus seems that Socrates' case is not *sui generis*, but representative for the intervention of *daimones* in (philosophical) people's lives.

An interesting detail, occurring in the first paragraph of the eighth oration, is that Maximus refers to Socrates as "musical in speech" (μουσικῷ δὲ εἰπεῖν). While this insertion is, for Maximus, not more than just one element in a swift characterization of Socrates' merits, it does indicate that the Tyrian also admired Socrates for his agreeable use of words. It must be said, though, that Maximus does not feel inclined to make an explicit association of this practice of 'musical' speech with the art of rhetoric, thus quite typically refraining from making a connection between the fields of philosophy and that of rhetoric.

Orations 18 to 21 are devoted to the problem of Socrates' love for young boys.[176] In the light of the changing mentality concerning pederasty in the Imperial era,[177] the self-evidence of Socrates' love for young boys as frequently described by Plato was under pressure and could do with a proper defence of an assertive orator. Maximus merely argues that Socrates' love is fully compatible with philosophy, as he felt love for the good virtuous nature of the boys rather than for their bodies. While this point is quite evident and easy to make, Maximus' extensive discussion, spread out over four orations, indicates that, as he did before in orations 8 and 9, he seizes the opportunity to embellish his discourse with numerous poetic and philosophical commonplaces that divert him somewhat from the strict nature of Socrates' love, and towards love in general. Yet the fact that this diversion is programmatically framed as a defence of Socrates bestows some aura of philosophical credibility on the Tyrian orator.

Socrates is also used as an *argumentum ex auctoritate* for a feature that he is less frequently commended for, viz. the fact that he, despite his own

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175 See, for one of the many original passages in Plato and Xenophon referring to Socrates' *daimonion*, Pl. *Apol.* 31c–d and Xen. *Mem.* 1.1.4. Later discussions about the *diamonion* include the work *Peri mantikês* of the second-century (BCE) Stoic Antipater, Cicero's *On divination* (1.54), Plutarch's dialogue and Apuleius' essay about the subject. For a comparison of the latter two with Maximus, see Droge (2007) and Roskam (2010).

176 See Szarmach (1982).

177 A very influential study on this subject is Foucault (1984), who discusses texts from Artemidorus, Plutarch, Musonius, and many others.

poverty, was primarily interested in rich youngsters in Athens, a fact which Maximus explains through Socrates' belief that, when the rich, talented, and prosperous citizens started to philosophize, they could be most useful to the city.[178] Given the self-referential character of Maximus' first oration, in which this passage occurs, it is tempting to believe that Maximus here advertises his own practice as very similar to that of Socrates, and that he also sees his own task as communicating philosophical wisdom to the *jeunesse dorée* of his own day in order to contribute to society's well-being.

Only one philosopher can rival with Socrates when it comes to the actual impact on Maximus' *dialexeis*, and this is obviously Plato. Although Plato is less often mentioned *nominatim* in the *dialexeis*, his general influence on Maximus even surpasses that of his master Socrates. Plato's general image in the orations can perfectly be reconciled with Maximus' own conception of philosophy. Apart from his doctrines, many of which are firmly defended by Maximus, he combined virtuous conduct[179] with freedom of terminology,[180] which Maximus labelled elsewhere as a philosophical virtue.[181] Finally, Maximus repeatedly recalls Plato's unsurpassed eloquence, even though, as with Socrates, the agreeable nature of his words is *not* attributed to the art of rhetoric.[182] The Plato we encounter here is not the systematised philosopher of Alcinoüs or later Neoplatonists, but rather a prototypical example of the philosophical paradigm which Maximus himself stands for, viz. an accessible and talented communicator of philosophical truth and an exemplary specimen of a virtuous man. In a couple of pages,[183] we will also examine how, in the eleventh oration, Maximus presents himself as an interpreter of Plato's ideas about god, thereby bestowing some solemn authority onto both Plato and himself.

We can be quite confident that Maximus had a fairly thorough knowledge of the Platonic dialogues. Apart from obvious imagery, such as the appropriation of the Platonic image of the charioteer and the horses,[184] there are also numerous verbal allusions to diverse dialogues, and even descriptions of entire Pla-

178 Max. *Or.* 1.9.
179 Max. *Or.* 15.8; 15.9; 34.9.
180 Max., *Or.* 21.4.
181 Max., *Or.* 1.8.
182 Max., *Or.* 11.1 ('ὁ εὐφωνότατος τῶν ὄντων Πλάτων'); 26.3 (where Plato is presented as an intellectual heir of Homer). Cf. Trapp (1997b), 1966 on Maximus' own Platonizing style of speaking.
183 See section 5.6.
184 See Pl. *Phdr.* 246a sqq. and 253d sqq. For the general importance of the *Phaedrus* as an intertext in Imperial literature, see Trapp (1990).

tonic scenes.[185] It is hard to determine, however, the extent to which Maximus knew these scenes, allusions, and imagery through a sourcebook or through an actual acquaintance with Plato's own texts. On the basis of an interesting hypothesis concerning the words "⟨ἀλλ'⟩ ἀντίθες τοι" in Maximus' twenty-sixth oration,[186] Renehan[187] concludes that Maximus must have borrowed this expression from Plato's *Gorgias*,[188] where this poetic phrase is cited. Since it here concerns a type of borrowing that can hardly have made it to an anthology of any kind, Renehan argues that this passage basically proves that Maximus' acquaintance with Plato exceeded the level of second-hand knowledge. While we can doubt the cogency of Renehan's argument to extrapolate his assertion to the entire corpus of *dialexeis*, it is interesting that this precious verbal allusion seems to suggest that Maximus was at least to some extent familiar with the original *Gorgias*, which also implies that he must have been aware of Plato's firm condemnation of the art of rhetoric and its sophistic defenders in this work. If this is indeed true, it makes it all the more striking that we find no direct allusions to its main subject in the *dialexeis*. However, we can wonder what Maximus could win or lose by presenting Plato's resolute rejection of the art of rhetoric to his audience, thus reminding them of the paradoxical tensions that run through his own practice of philosophical lecturing. In any case, his apparent silence concerning the discrepancy between the *Gorgias* and his own philosophical paradigm is less audacious than Apuleius' blunt transposition of Plato's condemnation of rhetoric, which must be understood as comprising all forms of eloquent oratory, to only the forensic practice of legal speech delivery.

Other philosophers who are allowed a more thorough treatment than mere name-dropping are the Presocratic Anaxagoras, whose imagined apology is staged by Maximus in the latter's discussion about the contemplative life, and the Post-Platonic Diogenes of Sinope, who receives ample commendation for his life as a Cynic in Maximus' thirty-sixth oration. In contrast with Socrates and Plato, however, the importance of these figures is primarily restricted to one single (part of a) *dialexis*. As a result, they seem to have benefited from some

185 See, e.g., Max. *Or*. 37.1, which offers an extensive paraphrase of Socrates' discussion with politicians described in Pl. *Resp*. 327a–c and 369a sqq.

186 Max. *Or*. 26.5.

187 See Renehan (1987), 47–48. His argumentation, partly built on an addition to the text, is in itself rather suspect, but not entirely implausible. It is, at least, well backed up by some thorough knowledge of ancient Greek in general and the Greek of Maximus of Tyre in particular.

188 See Pl. *Gorg*. 461e. The poetic citation is likely to be a tragic one. It is attested in Crates Comicus, but may refer to an older tragedy, to which Crates referred as a sort of *pastiche*.

momentary attention for their cases from Maximus part, but do not appear to have left a far-reaching impression on the Tyrian's conception of philosophy.

In conclusion, when scholars quickly take a look at the *index nominum et locorum* of Maximus' *dialexeis*,[189] they may initially be pleased to detect a fairly wide variety of philosophical forbearers and consequently expect a rich philosophical talk full of ingenuous arguments borrowed from a wide variety of big names from the field of traditional philosophy. This enthusiasm, however, soon evaporates when we see just how little philosophical thought Maximus extracts from all these philosophers. Maximean references to philosophers tend to turn them into one-dimensional characters, the mere mentioning of whom appears to authorize Maximus' message without necessitating him to plunge into highly sophisticated philosophical discussions. This does not mean that Maximus is entirely unaware of the philosophical debates of his day—after all, many of his reasonings closely resemble those of contemporary sources—but on the level of literal adherence, only Plato, Socrates, and Homer can apparently claim a little more than just the role of a muzzled bystander as Maximus develops his eloquent answers to the philosophical problems that present themselves. It is hard to avoid the impression that, in comparison with some more technical school philosophers of his era, Maximus' mental schemes are working as those of an orator in search of a swift aura of knowledge and education, rather than those of a philosopher offering a deep and critical reflection on other philosophers' ideas. Yet, as already remarked, in light of Maximus' own definition of philosophy, this does not necessarily imply that his discourse must have made a less philosophical impression on Maximus' original audience.

5.5 *Maximus as a Philosopher?*

In his first oration, Maximus points out to his listeners that he lowers his boastful voice for those who are truly interested in philosophical matters.[190] At first glance, this humble tone seems to be justified by Maximus' careful refusal throughout his entire oeuvre to apply the title of 'philosopher' to himself. In fact, there is not one single passage in Maximus' orations in which he explicitly claims to be a philosopher. Yet, under closer scrutiny, his self-asserted presentation of philosophical knowledge produces a continuous sense of rhetorical innuendo through which the aura of the true philosopher is (partly) bestowed upon him as well. The effective result of this can already be measured on the basis of the attribute 'φιλόσοφος' in the *Suda*, which basically implies that

189 The most comprehensive one, to my knowledge, can be found in Trapp (1994), 359–377.

190 See Max. *Or.* 1.7.

Maximus at least convinced the person responsible for this attribute[191] (and probably many others with him) of his status as a philosopher. The reason for Maximus' staged humility and reverence for the field of philosophy is probably linked to Maximus' awareness that an overtly self-aware promotion of his philosophical status was not in accordance with traditional philosophical discourses, which tended to downplay one's own authority when it comes to the absolute truth. Furthermore, it could be explained by his attempt to be seen as an insider to the world of his audience.

Maximus' careful handling of philosophical authority provides him with an interesting position outside the philosophical tradition. Indeed, Maximus can talk about the philosophical tradition and present himself as a great connoisseur of this tradition without actually (explicitly) reckoning himself as a member of it. This gives the Tyrian the freedom to either praise or blame philosophers in the service of his personal self-presentation. Therefore, apart from passages in which he praises the institution of philosophy and indirectly applies such praise to his own practice, he can also castigate the individual members of this very same institution and yet enjoy an undamaged authority himself.

Some examples may suffice to illustrate the advantages of this comfortable discursive position outside the philosophical tradition. When Maximus offers an historical reconstruction of the transition from Homer's and Hesiod's poetic wisdom to philosophical thought, we find the following self-advertising reasoning.

> Τοιγαροῦν τὰ μὲν Ὁμήρου καὶ Ἡσιόδου ἔπη καὶ πᾶσα ἡ παλαιὰ μοῦσα ἐκείνη καὶ ἔνθεος μύθου χώραν ἔχει, καὶ ἀγαπᾶται αὐτῶν ἡ ἱστορία μόνον καὶ τὸ προσηνὲς τῶν ἔπων καὶ τὸ εὐανθὲς τῆς ἁρμονίας, ὡς αὐλήματα, ὡς κιθαρίσματα, παροράται δὲ τὸ ἐν αὐτοῖς καλόν, καὶ ἀποχειροτονεῖται τῆς ἀρετῆς. Καὶ Ὅμηρος μὲν ἀποκηρύττεται φιλοσοφίας, ὁ ἡγεμὼν τοῦ γένους, ἀφ' οὗ δὲ τὰ ἐκ Θρᾴκης καὶ Κιλικίας σοφίσματα εἰς τὴν Ἑλλάδα παρέδυ, καὶ ἡ Ἐπικούρου ἄτομος, καὶ τὸ Ἡρακλείτου πῦρ, καὶ τὸ Θαλοῦ ὕδωρ, καὶ τὸ Ἀναξιμένους πνεῦμα, καὶ τὸ Ἐμπεδοκλέους νεῖκος, καὶ ὁ Διογένους πίθος, καὶ τὰ πολλὰ τῶν φιλοσόφων στρατόπεδα ἀντιτεταγμένα ἀλλήλοις καὶ ἀντιπαιωνίζοντα, λόγων μὲν πάντα μεστὰ καὶ ψιθυρισμάτων, σοφιστῶν σοφισταῖς συμπιπτόντων, ἔργου δὲ ἐρημία δεινή· καὶ τὸ θρυλούμενον τοῦτο, τὸ ἀγαθόν, ὑπὲρ οὗ διέστηκεν καὶ διεστασίασται τὸ Ἑλληνικόν, οὐδεὶς ὁρᾷ.

191 This could be Hesychius of Miletus, who is responsible for the entry in the *Suda*, but the attribute 'philosopher' for Maximus probably predated Hesychius' writings.

> This is why the poems of Homer and Hesiod, and indeed all the famous inspired poetry of ancient times, now count as mere myth. It is the stories they tell and the pleasantness of their verses and the brilliance of their composition that alone are enjoyed, for all the world like pipe-music or lyre-playing, while the truly noble element in them is overlooked and declared to have nothing to do with virtue. And Homer, who was in fact the first philosopher of all, is banished from Philosophy. Yet from the moment that there came to Hellas the clever ideas hatched in Thrace and Cilicia, and Epicurus' atoms, and Heraclitus' fire, and Thales' water, and Anaximenes' air, and Empedocles' strife, and Diogenes' jar, and all those warring camps of the philosophers, clamouring against each other, the world has been full of mumbled words, as sophists clash with sophists, but there has been a terrible shortage of deeds. And that much-vaunted 'Good', over which the Greek world has divided into its hostile factions, has been completely lost to sight.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 26.2

Maximus' momentary praise of poetry as an original form of wisdom merely forces him to downplay later philosophical deviations from this original truth. Therefore, in this particular case, it is convenient to abandon any association with the institution of philosophy as represented by some philosophers (notice that neither Plato nor Socrates is mentioned in the list). Maximus' innuendo here works on an entirely different level. Instead of suggesting that he himself ought to be seen as one of the philosophers who are blamed, the suggestion is made that Maximus stands not only outside this tradition, but even far above it, in that he is in fact capable of seeing what no traditional philosopher appears to see (otherwise, he could not come to this analysis of the situation). The rhetorical effect on the audience is quite obvious: Maximus is ultimately a speaker who can be trusted even more as an authoritative source of insight than the philosophical tradition (as represented here) itself. In this case, Maximus wants to convince his audience of the fact that his analysis of Homer's poetry is far more relevant (read: more philosophical) than the doctrines of the philosophers. Moreover, it is suggested that the people who are traditionally regarded as philosophers and who are listed here are in fact no better than quarrelling sophists who detract the attention from the original truth.

A similar account, though less negative towards the institution of philosophy itself, can be found in Maximus' discussion of the true purpose of life. At the end of the twenty-ninth oration, he advertises the use of philosophy in choosing one's path in life instead of divine oracles. However, he immediately remarks that it is difficult to find a stable truth amongst the divergent opinions of

individual philosophers. In the grand finale to the oration, Maximus radically identifies himself with his audience, even to the extent that his authoritative voice is temporarily exchanged for an enthused sequence of insecure questions:

> Τὴν δὲ τῶν ἀνθρώπων ἀγέλην, τὴν σύννομον, τὴν ἡμερωτάτην, τὴν κοινωνικωτάτην, τὴν λογικωτάτην, κινδυνεύει διαλύειν καὶ διασπᾶν οὐκ ἐπιθυμία δημώδης μόνον, οὐδὲ ὀρέξεις ἄλογοι, οὐδὲ ἔρωτες κενοί, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ βεβαιότατον τῶν ὄντων, φιλοσοφία· πολλοὺς καὶ αὕτη δήμους ποιεῖ καὶ νομοθέτας μυρίους· διασπᾷ καὶ διασκίδνησιν τὴν ἀγέλην, καὶ πέμπει ἄλλον ἀλλαχοῦ, Πυθαγόραν μὲν ἐπὶ μουσικήν, Θαλῆ⟨ν⟩ δὲ ἐπὶ ἀστρονομίαν, Ἡράκλειτον δὲ ἐπὶ ἐρημίαν, Σωκράτην δὲ ἐπὶ ἔρωτας, Καρνεάδην δὲ ἐπὶ ἄγνοιαν, Διογένην ἐπὶ πόνους, Ἐπίκουρον ἐφ' ἡδονήν. Ὁρᾷς τὸ πλῆθος τῶν ἡγεμόνων, ὁρᾷς τὸ πλῆθος τῶν συνθημάτων. Ποῖ τις τράπηται; Ποῖον αὐτῶν καταδέξωμαι; Τίνι πεισθῶ τῶν παραγγελμάτων;
>
> But the human herd, that pastures together and is the tamest and most sociable and most rational of all, is split and pulled apart not by vulgar desire or irrational appetites or vain infatuation alone, but also by that most stable of all things, Philosophy! Philosophy too creates many peoples and countless legislators, splitting and scattering the herd, and sending its different members in different directions, Pythagoras to music, Thales to astronomy, Heraclitus to solitude, Socrates to love-affairs, Carneades to scepticism, Diogenes to hard labour, Epicurus to pleasure. Do you see what a crowd of leaders there is, what a mass of watchwords? Which way is a man to turn? Which of them should I accept? Which of their exhortations should I heed?
>
> MAX. *Or.* 29.7

However, in the next four orations, which neatly correspond to the previous one thematically, Maximus regains his self-assured tone again, distancing himself from the audience and appearing to give a firm and indubitable reply.[192] However, the audience does not receive a systematic overview of the philosophical positions of each individual philosopher or school. Rather, Maximus self-confidently narrows the central question—what is the true purpose of philosophy?—down to the conflict between rational virtue and pleasure, a representation in which individual particularities are moved to the background. In this manner, Maximus continues to show his firm grip on the material he presents in a fairly swift and versatile way, ultimately insinuating that if

192 Cf. Max. *Or.* 30.2.

there is one individual to be trusted and followed concerning these matters, it is Maximus himself, who appears to stand above all the futile quarrelling of the philosophers and can offer a confident discussion of the true purpose of life.

In light of Maximus' apparent willingness to argue some cases from two opposite perspectives with an equal degree of vividness and devotion,[193] it seems all the more paradoxical that he passes such a harsh judgement on the philosophical tradition for its being incapable of surmounting the internal disagreements. Yet, here again, Maximus may have cunningly weaseled himself out of the picture, as he nowhere explicitly presents himself as a philosopher, and is thus forced to display the consistency asked from other philosophers to a lesser extent. On the other hand, the fact that he can apparently place himself on two different sides of the debate seems to portray him as a distant observer who can ultimately pass better deliberated judgements than those who are stuck in their own dogmatic premises. He can thus simultaneously suggest himself to be less philosophical than the traditional philosophers, which gives him more freedom to divert from typical philosophical practices, and to be more philosophical, which makes him the *locus* of truth as it emerges from careful processes of selection, approval, and refutation of traditional philosophical material.

These examples show that, in the end, Maximus' refusal to explicitly apply the title of 'philosopher' or something similar to himself provides him with a flexible set of rhetorical and discursive techniques to back up his self-representation as a knowledgeable and trustworthy speaker concerning philosophical matters.

5.6 *Insight into the Divine*

Ever since Xenophanes, who criticized Homer for his anthropomorphic and morally degenerate picture of the gods, philosophers have claimed to offer some thorough insights into the workings of the divine order, thus partly establishing an overlap between religion and philosophy. Plato and Aristotle developed their own conceptions about god being a demiurge, the Stoics saved an important place for divine providence in their physical theories, and the Epicureans acknowledged the existence of the gods, while also maintaining that they were not interested in human beings, as many other philosophies appeared to assume. In Imperial times, we see a number of public intellectuals who are linked to some aspect of religion, and who make this a part of their

193 See section 7.2 for an extensive illustration.

philosophical self-representation.[194] Apollonius of Tyana, for instance, seems to have pursued the life of a pagan holy man,[195] which tempted Philostratus into believing that he was the reincarnation of the spirit of the wise Pythagoras.[196] Plutarch of Chaeronea occupied an influential religious position as the senior priest at the Delphic oracle, and devoted, among other works with a religious flavour, a fairly extensive philosophical dialogue to the meaning of the letter E (epsilon) which stood on top of the temple of Apollo in Delphi.[197] Apuleius, finally, was allegedly an important priest in his home region of Africa, and makes some allusions to his status as an initiate in some mystery cults. These examples illustrate that, far from being incompatible with the field of philosophy, religion and knowledge about the divine order has the potential to contribute to a philosopher's distinctive self-representation. Maximus can definitely be reckoned among the philosophers who rhetorically turn their knowledge about the gods into a mechanism of philosophical self-authorization.

Following Plato's definition of the good life as the assimilation to god,[198] Maximus seems to encourage his pupils to come closer to the ultimate understanding of the divine.[199] In this context, it is worthwhile to point to Maximus' definition of philosophy as "detailed knowledge of matters divine and human, the source of Virtue and noble thoughts and a harmonious style of life and sophisticated habits."[200]

In Maximus' sixth oration, he follows traditional Greek anthropology in defining the place of man as a liminal space between the animals and the gods. Accordingly, the proper human conduct as performed by philosophers is to turn away from the animals and mentally approach the divine order. To accomplish this, men should employ that which separates them from the animals, i.e. intellect. This aspect may enable one to reach 'human' knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) and may inspire one to search for 'divine' wisdom (σοφία).[201]

194 For a broad discussion of the philosophical 'rethinking' of the gods, as it is labelled, see Van Nuffelen (2011).

195 See Anderson (1994).

196 Phil. *VA*. 1.1.

197 See Plut. *E.ap.Delph*.

198 The traditional idea of the ὁμοίωσις θεῷ can be found in Pl. *Tht*. 176BC.

199 For Maximus' position as a so-called 'theologian', see Rohdich (1879) and Soury (1942).

200 Max. *Or*. 26.1.

201 See esp. Max. *Or*. 6.1–3. There is, however, quite typically for Maximus, already some terminological impreciseness in *Or*. 6.5, where the concept of ἐπιστήμη seems to be less rigorously used than it was defined in the first paragraphs.

The forty-first oration is another source illustrating Maximus' insights into the divine order, as it refutes the idea that god would be responsible for all evil in the world. Maximus here sees himself essentially forced to defend the divine order against superficial attacks concerning its good nature. In order to do so, he seems to present his ideas as if they stem from the highest divine insight. Maximus thus distinguishes himself from his audience, apparently adopting a god-like perspective.

> Ἃ δὲ ἡμεῖς καλοῦμεν κακὰ καὶ φθοράς, καὶ ἐφ' οἷς ὀδυρόμεθα, ταῦτα ὁ τεχνίτης[202] καλεῖ σωτηρίαν τοῦ ὅλου. Μέλει γὰρ αὐτῷ τοῦ ὅλου, τὸ δὲ μέρος ἀνάγκη κακοῦσθαι ὑπὲρ τοῦ ὅλου. (…) Ὁρᾷς οὖν τὰ πάθη, ἃ σὺ μὲν καλεῖς φθοράν, τεκμαιρόμενος τῇ τῶν ἀπιόντων ὁδῷ, ἐγὼ δὲ σωτηρίαν, τεκμαιρόμενος τῇ διαδοχῇ τῶν μελλόντων.
>
> What we call evil and ruin, the things we lament over, the craftsman calls the preservation of the whole. His concern is precisely for the whole, and it is necessary for the part to suffer in the interests of that whole. (…) You can see then that these events, which you call destruction, judging by the passing away of what is lost, I call preservation, judging by the succession of what follows on.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 41.4

In the course of the argumentation, Maximus' 'insider's' rhetoric is temporarily abandoned, in that he here jumps from the perspective of 'we' as opposed to the 'craftsman' to 'you' as opposed to 'I', which highlights the speaker's insightful supremacy. Maximus thus appears to rise above the easy criticisms against god (which are only due to the ignorance of the critics) and encourages his audience to do the same. By defending god through an identification with His supreme insight, Maximus cunningly seems to authorize himself as a proper philosopher.

In a similar vein, Maximus' remarkable assertion in the ninth oration, viz. that he has seen the Dioscuri, Asclepius, and Heracles, seems to depict him as a privileged person whose philosophical insights make him capable of having direct contact with the daemonic order.[203]

As already mentioned, the fourth and the twenty-sixth oration suggest that thorough knowledge of (the right interpretation of) poetic texts and references

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202 God is meant, in the spirit of the Platonic tradition.

203 See Max. *Or.* 9.7.

are a valuable stepping-stone towards reaching a higher degree of understanding about god. Since there is no essential difference between early poetry and philosophy (Maximus argues), Homer and his colleagues are as good a source as any philosopher.

This is not to say, however, that Maximus pays no attention to other, more 'philosophical' (in the modern sense) ideas concerning the divine. The most important speech concerning the philosophical image of god is Maximus' eleventh oration, in which (Middle-Platonist interpretations of) Plato's views on god are put forward. Quite striking is Maximus' very self-assured presentation of god, which almost automatically forces his audience into the role of passive receivers of Maximus' knowledge. Near the end of the oration, Maximus even seems to assume that his audience will (unlike himself!) not completely grasp what the divine is all about:

> Εἰ δὲ ἐξασθενεῖς πρὸς τὴν τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ δημιουργοῦ θέαν, ἀρκεῖ σοι τὰ ἔργα ἐν τῷ παρόντι ὁρᾶν, καὶ προσκυνεῖν τὰ ἔγγονα πολλὰ καὶ παντοδαπὰ ὄντα, οὐχ ὅσα Βοιώτιος ποιητὴς λέγει.
>
> But if you are not strong enough to see the Father and Creator, then it must suffice *for you*[204] for the moment to contemplate his works and to worship his offspring, who are many and varied, far more numerous than the Boeotian poet says.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 11.12

The allusion to the hard task of knowing the Father and the Creator, and to the impossibility to communicate His essence to each and everyone, is a Platonic *topos*, echoing Timaeus' words in his dialogue with Socrates.[205] Maximus' suggestion seems to be that he has already gone through the hard task of discovering the Father, but that his audience, far from capable of capturing the Father, better restrict themselves to the less demanding task of contemplating His work. The tone is fairly patronizing, in that it encourages the listeners to take part in Maximus' reasoning for as far as their intellectual capacities reach, but at the same time already anticipates the fact that these listeners are no intellectual peers of the speaker in front of them. It thus becomes apparent how

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204 I like to add these two words to Trapp's translation to bring out Maximus' suggestion that knowledge of the divine is not necessarily restricted for Maximus himself, but merely for his listeners.

205 Pl. *Tim.* 28c.

Maximus' supreme insight into the divine sets him apart from the members of his audience, which adds to the exclusiveness of his philosophical paradigm.

For his own supreme knowledge of god, as is evidenced in the eleventh oration, Maximus not only builds on his understanding of the divine order, but also on his knowledge of previous interpreters, in this case Plato. It is interesting to see how, in the long introduction to the actual talk about god, Maximus negotiates for himself a certain authority as a spokesman of Plato as well as god. In the beginning of the speech, Maximus hastens to acknowledge that the divine is so complex that it would already be a success to get but a small glimpse of its greatness. The main reason for Maximus' attempt at a discussion of god appears to be the audience's interest, for—to use Maximus' imagery—it is their thirst for knowledge that provokes him to give them, if not a full account on the divine (which even Plato could not give to the people), then at least the bare minimum which they need to slake their thirst (11.1). Subsequently, Maximus seems to hit suddenly upon a proper approach to deal with the matter: reading Plato is compared to mining for gold. At first, some assistance is needed, after which the gold is purified and ready for practical use. Accordingly, Maximus' task is represented to consist of purifying the truth from Plato's words, i.e. his dialogues (11.2). The following paragraphs (11.3–5) merely state that, while many different professions, persons, and peoples disagree about all other things, they share a common belief in one great god, even though some philosophers deny Him certain aspects. In the last introductory paragraph (11.6), we finally get a clear image of Maximus' place *vis-à-vis* Plato and god:

> Εἴθε μοι μαντεῖον ἦν ἐκ Διός, ἢ Ἀπόλλωνος, οὐ λοξὰ χρησμῳδοῦν, οὐδὲ ἀμφίβολα. (…) Ἐμοὶ δὲ σαφῶς ὁ Ἀπόλλων ἐκ Δελφῶν περὶ τοῦ Διὸς ἀποκρινάσθω, ἢ ὁ Ζεὺς αὐτὸς. Ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ τίς; Ἐξ Ἀκαδημίας ὑποφήτης τοῦ θεοῦ, ἀνὴρ Ἀττικός, μαντικός· ἀποκρίνεται δὲ ὧδε.
>
> Would that I had an oracle of Zeus or Apollo, that gave answers neither indirect nor ambivalent. (…) Let my answer be about Zeus and let it come clearly from Apollo in Delphi, or from Zeus himself.[206] But who will answer me on his behalf? It is from the Academy that the god's spokesman hails, a man of Attica with the gift of divination. His answer goes like this.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 11.6

206 Note that, when some intermediate amplificatory sentences are removed, there appears an obvious discrepancy between the *irrealis* in the first sentence and the fact that Maximus eventually asks the question anyway, having confidence that Plato can here operate as a sort of oracle.

Maximus' negotiation of authority in this passage is as interesting as it is brilliant. Plato is likened to a ὑποφήτης and a μαντικός [ἀνήρ], who can speak on behalf of the god as if it were a revelation of the god's words themselves. It is thus suggested that Plato can give an unmediated access to divine truth. This representation bestows on the founder of the Academy a rock-solid authority as a *locus* of truthful discourse, whose words can be taken as no less trustworthy than those of the god himself. Yet, bearing in mind that Plato's words must be purified in order to get pure gold, Maximus' own position runs remarkably parallel with Plato's. Just as Plato communicates god's wisdom (in the latter's absence), so Maximus portrays himself as a knowledgeable translator of Plato's messages to the audience. In a sense, it seems as if the following paragraphs, which are firmly grounded in Platonic doctrine, come directly from Plato's mouth, and that Maximus' subjectivity is entirely absent from the message. Through this process of authorization, it is suggested that Maximus offers access to the true conception of the god no less directly than Plato, merely purifying Plato's message to such an extent that it can be useful for his own audience. Thus, the theology discussed here is ascribed to Plato's own intentional message (authorized by the god himself), not to Maximus' interpretations. This is yet again an example where Maximus' performed reverence for god as well as Plato ultimately corroborates his own ethos.

It is clear, then, that a Maximean philosopher should not solely be occupied with human affairs, but also with higher vocations. Following the philosophical tradition, Maximus portrays the philosopher as someone who stays in closer contact with the gods than ordinary citizens. As a matter of fact, it is, above all else, in his understanding about god that the philosopher may distinguish himself from ordinary citizens. This element of distinction, apart from being grounded in the true belief that a philosopher should stand out of the common run, also fulfils an important social function, which could turn it into a rhetorical mechanism enabling Maximus to persuade the audience of the social assets of acquiring the aura of a philosopher.

5.7 *Philosophical Distinction*

A final aspect of philosophy in the *dialexeis* concerns the way in which Maximus' representation of the field of philosophy inscribes itself in the wider social ideology that affirms the natural dominance of the elite over the common people.[207] We have just seen that knowledge of the divine, stemming from

207 Cf. Hope (2000), 127: "(…) [T]he basis for distinction [in the Roman world] could be diverse and involved both legal and social factors." See also Huskinson (2000), 115: "[B]y

philosophical pursuits, can have a distinctive function for an aspiring philosopher. The result is a fairly patronizing discourse towards the common run, which we also find in other *dialexeis*, mostly concerning topics that are also relevant for ordinary people.

With regard to the popular practice of fabricating images of the gods, the topic of Maximus' second *dialexis*, the Tyrian shows himself quite tolerant, although he also emphasizes the distinctive role of the wise people in opposition to the common run. The oration thus conveys a double message: on the one hand, it preaches a compassionate attitude, applying the theory of associative memory as discussed in Plato's *Phaedo*,[208] towards the ordinary people who are apparently in need of images to love and worship the divine:

> Αὐτὸ ἐκεῖνο τὸ τῶν ἐρώντων πάθος, οἷς ἥδιστον μὲν εἰς θέαμα οἱ τῶν παιδικῶν τύποι, ἡδὺ δὲ εἰς ἀνάμνησιν καὶ λύρα, καὶ ἀκόντιον, καὶ θῶκός που, καὶ δρόμος, καὶ πᾶν ἁπλῶς τὸ ἐπεγεῖρον τὴν μνήμην τοῦ ἐρωμένου. Τί μοι τὸ λοιπὸν ἐξετάζειν καὶ νομοθετεῖν ὑπὲρ ἀγαλμάτων; Θεῖον ἴστωσαν γένος, ἴστωσαν μόνον. Εἰ δὲ Ἕλληνας μὲν ἐπεγείρει πρὸς τὴν μνήμην τοῦ θεοῦ ἡ Φειδίου τέχνη, Αἰγυπτίους δὲ ἡ πρὸς τὰ ζῷα τιμή, καὶ ποταμὸς ἄλλους, καὶ πῦρ ἄλλους, οὐ νεμεσῶ τῆς διαφωνίας· ἴστωσαν μόνον, ἐράτωσαν μόνον, μνημονευέτωσαν.
>
> We are like lovers, for whom the sweetest thing of all is the sight of the loved one's form, but who also find pleasure in the recollections stirred by a lyre and a javelin or a seat or a racetrack, or in general by anything that arouses memories of our beloved. What point is there in my continuing to enquire into this topic of images and to lay down the law about it? Let men know the race of the gods, let them only know it! If it is the art of Phidias that arouses recollections of God for the Greeks, while for the Egyptians it is the worship of such animals, and a river or fire for others, I have no objection to such diversity. Let them only know God, love him, and recollect him!
>
> MAX. *Or.* 2.10

On the other hand, Maximus' public itself seems to be encouraged to surpass the futile image making that is tolerable but not desirable for the wiser men:

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the second century AD attitudes started to change: Romans began to represent themselves as intellectuals in the context of public life, and as it was espoused by emperors such as Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius the theme of the Roman intellectual became quite popular."

208 Pl. *Phdo.* 73D.

> Οἷς μὲν οὖν ἡ μνήμη ἔρρωται, καὶ δύνανται, εὐθὺ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἀνατεινόμενοι τῇ ψυχῇ, τῷ θείῳ ἐντυγχάνειν, οὐδὲν ἴσως δεῖ τούτοις ἀγαλμάτων. Σπάνιον δὲ ἐν ἀνθρώποις τὸ τοιοῦτο γένος, καὶ οὐκ ἂν ἐντύχοις δήμῳ ἀθρόῳ τοῦ θείου μνήμονι, καὶ μὴ δεομένῳ τοιαύτης ἐπικουρίας.
>
> People whose memories are strong, and who can reach straight out for the heavens with their souls and encounter the divine, may perhaps have no need of images. But this is a category ill-represented among men, and one could not hope ever to encounter a whole people mindful of the divine and able to dispense with that kind of assistance.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 2.2

Scarcity is an important principle in Maximus' attempt at winning over his public for his cause. While the opinion of the common run is not entirely rejected, he emphasizes that there is a small class of men who have a better access to the divine as a result of their stronger memory. For an elite public in search of mechanisms that naturalize its dominance over ordinary people, it must have been quite an encouragement to hear that the philosophical preacher in front of them offers an alternative conception of the gods that distinguishes itself from mere popular belief and presents itself as more elevated, truer, and more valuable.

When Maximus talks about friendship, we find the same principle of scarcity that encourages the audience to side with the small class of philosophers who distinguish themselves from the others:

> Πολλάς σε δεῖ ἡδονὰς παραδραμεῖν καὶ πολλοῖς πόνοις ἀντιβλέψαι, ἵνα κτήσῃ κτῆμα ἡδοναῖς πάσαις ἰσοστάσιον, καὶ πόνοις πᾶσιν ἀντίρροπον, κτῆμα χρυσοῦ *τιμιώτερον*, κτῆμα ὥρας *βεβαιότερον*, κτῆμα δόξης *ἀσφαλέστερον*, κτῆμα τιμῆς *ἀληθέστερον*, κτῆμα αὐθαίρετον, αὐτεπάγγελτον, κτῆμα ἀδεκάστως ἐπαινούμενον, κτῆμα, κἂν λύπην κἂν πρᾶξιν φέρῃ, εὐφραῖνον τὸν δρῶντα κατὰ τὴν μνήμην τῆς αἰτίας. *Σπάνιον δὲ τὸ κτῆμα τοῦτο*· τὸ δὲ εἴδωλον αὐτοῦ πρόχειρον καὶ παντοδαπόν, κολάκων ἑσμοὶ καὶ θίασοι, σεσηρότων καὶ σαινόντων, καὶ ἐπ' ἄκρᾳ τῇ γλώττῃ τὸ φιλεῖν ἐχόντων· οὐχ ὑπ' εὐνοίας ἀγομένων, ἀλλ' ὑπὸ τῆς χρείας ἠναγκασμένων· καὶ μισθοφόρων, ἀλλὰ οὐ φίλων.
>
> You must turn your back on many pleasures and face up to many labours in order to win a possession that is equal in worth to all pleasures and compensates for all toils, a possession more valuable than gold, more enchanting than youthful beauty, more secure than reputation, more real than honour, a possession sought for itself, that offers itself freely, that is

> praised without partiality, that even if it brings grief and trouble gladdens the practitioner with the recollection of its cause. This possession is a rarity. But its counterfeit is ready at hand in every conceivable form, in the warming bands of flatterers, grinning and fawning and bearing friendship on the tips of their tongues, not led on by good will but forced by need, mercenaries not friends.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 35.6–7

The amplificatory use of comparative forms indicates that true friendship has the distinctive quality to rise above the futile pursuits of everyday life, such as gold, youth, fame, and honour. Quite paradoxically, even if we assume that Maximus' listeners did not come to the Tyrian just in search of a more meaningful life, what may have been part of the appeal of Maximus' philosophical definition of friendship is that it enables high-class citizens practising Maximus' form of friendship to gain social capital by presenting themselves as more significant friends *vis-à-vis* their acquaintances. It is thus not hard to imagine that this type of discourse has every potential to appeal to elite citizens, who must have wanted to turn their social relationships into fruitful contributions to their distinctive self-definition.

A similar example of philosophical distinction can be found in the fifth oration *On prayer*. This theme evidently occurs in philosophical and popular moral thought, which tends to contrast the idle pursuits of the ordinary people with the truly valuable occupations of the wise.[209] Many people are said to wish for unstable things instead of what really matters in life. Therefore, the castigation of 'bad' prayers is a profitable theme for a philosopher's self-positioning against the masses, as Maximus' case illustrates. Taking Socrates as his prime example and echoing Diotima's description of the mediating function of the *daimon* Love[210] as if it were his own definition of a prayer, he explains that, even while praying, a philosopher distinguishes himself from the ordinary people:

> Ἀλλὰ σὺ μὲν ἡγεῖ τὴν τοῦ φιλοσόφου εὐχὴν αἴτησιν εἶναι τῶν οὐ παρόντων, ἐγὼ δὲ ὁμιλίαν καὶ διάλεκτον πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς περὶ τῶν παρόντων, καὶ ἐπίδειξιν τῆς ἀρετῆς. Ἦ, οἴει, τοῦτο εὔχετο ὁ Σωκράτης, ὅπως αὐτῷ χρήματα γένηται, ἢ ὅπως

209 See, e.g., Sen. *Ep.* 60 and Epict. 4.6.32–38. Persius, a friend and student of the Stoic philosopher Cornutus, alludes to the theme several times in his second satire. For further thematic intertexts for the fifth *dialexis*, see Puiggali (1983), 265–282.

210 See Pl. *Smp.* 203a.

> ἄρξει Ἀθηναίων; Πολλοῦ γε καὶ δεῖ. Ἀλλ᾽ εὔχετο μὲν τοῖς θεοῖς, ἐλάμβανεν δὲ παρ᾽ ἑαυτοῦ, συνεπινευόντων ἐκείνων, ἀρετὴν ψυχῆς, καὶ ἡσυχίαν βίου, καὶ ζωὴν ἄμεμπτον, καὶ εὔελπιν θάνατον, τὰ θαυμαστὰ δῶρα, τὰ θεοῖς δοτά.
>
> But you believe the philosopher's prayer to be a request for what he does not have, whereas in my opinion it is a conversation or discussion with the gods about what he does have, and a demonstration of his virtue. Or do you think that Socrates really prayed for riches or for power over the Athenians? Far from it! It was indeed to the gods that he prayed, but it was from himself, with their blessing, that he received his virtuous soul, his serene career, his irreproachable life, and his cheerful death—those amazing, 'god-given' gifts.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 5.8

Not only does Maximus contrast the philosophers with others, he also implicitly blames someone who does not possess the same knowledge as he for not understanding what a truly philosophical prayer is all about. The distinction between philosophers and non-philosophers thus works on two different levels. On the one hand, the praying philosophers do so in a manner quite different from the common run; on the other, in understanding the true nature of a philosophical prayer, Maximus polemically distinguishes himself from the imaginary and apparently less knowledgeable person addressed here. In both cases, the performative speech act is to persuade the audience to share Maximus' philosophical side of the debate in order to be safeguarded from his criticisms.

This is not the only time when Socrates is staged as a distinctive philosopher who places himself outside the practices of the masses. The distinctive and nontrivial character of Socrates' love, which may at first sight seem an unphilosophical part of his life, is the topic of orations eighteen to twenty-one. Consider how the principle of distinction determines the vocabulary and the grammatical structure of the following sentence:

> *Τοῖς* μὲν γὰρ *ἄλλοις*
> ὁ ἔρως ἦν
> ὄνομα ἐπιθυμίας ἐν ἡδοναῖς πλανώμενον,
> ἀρχη δὲ αὐτοῦ ἄνθος σώματος ἐρχόμενον εἰς ὀφθαλμοὺς καὶ δι᾽ αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ῥέον·
> ὁδοὶ γὰρ κάλλους οἱ ὀφθαλμοί·
> *τῷ* δὲ *Σωκράτει*
> ὁ ἔρως ἦν
> κατὰ μὲν τὴν σπουδὴν *τοῖς ἄλλοις* ὅμοιος,

κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἐπιθυμίαν διαφέρων,
κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἡδονὴν σωφρονέστερος,
κατὰ δὲ τὴν ἀρετὴν εὐστοχώτερος,
ἄρχη δὲ αὐτοῦ ψυχῆς ἄνθος ἐν σώματι διαφαινόμενον.

For the others 'love' was a name for lust adrift in a sea of pleasure; it took its beginning from physical beauty falling on the eyes and flowing through them into the soul (the eyes are Beauty's highway). But Socrates' love, though like theirs in its intensity, differed radically in its desires, being more self-controlled in its pursuit of physical pleasure and more surely aimed at virtuous ends; its beginning was a beautiful soul shining through the body that housed it.

MAX. *Or.* 19.2

This passage clearly contributes to the distinctive qualities that Maximus wants to bestow upon his philosophical perspective. Given that *Socrates* is the one to be defended by Maximus' discourse, the main strategy of the passage is to show the opposition between the pleasure-loving others, who have no idea of true love, and the philosopher Socrates, who can be taken as a model for the right dealings with love. Throughout his defence of Socrates, Maximus thus highlights how a philosopher can rise above the futile pleasures of the masses, and enjoy a privileged form of love that is far more praiseworthy than the love experienced by the common people. Therefore, even though a wise man such as Socrates may seem to act in the same way as his fellow citizens, he really experiences love in line with his philosophical character. It is tempting to believe that this type of argument also adds to the persuasiveness of Maximus' paradigm for his model audience, which did probably not consist of full-blown philosophers. Maximus here merely illustrates that one's daily pursuits and experiences, even though many may take them as unphilosophical and undistinguished, can also provide one with enough mechanisms to set oneself apart from the masses.[211] It is probably this practical and social aspect of philosophy, more than doctrinal 'quibbling', that may have appealed to the public that attended Maximus' speeches.

211 Notice that in the context of the Roman Empire, there was an obvious link between ethical behaviour and political authority. Cf. Takács (2009), xix: "Roman writers explained the acquisition and maintenance of empire as a result of virtuous behavior. In their view, politics and morality went hand in hand. It was their traditional moral code that guided and defined these virtuous men, guardians of a vast, multicultural, and transforming empire."

In conclusion, then, this distinctive character of philosophy is certainly not confined to Maximus' presentation of it, as the idea that the philosopher should place himself above the daily pursuits of his fellow citizens pervades the history of philosophy. What has been demonstrated, though, is how Maximus' orations exploit traditional philosophical discourses in persuading the audience that the cultivation of a philosophical life and speech can set them apart from the masses of people who merely conduct their lives without any insight or refinement (which was in Antiquity typically associated with the inferior social classes, as a result of their lower degree of education). The distinctive element of philosophy may contribute both to the listeners' cultivated image *vis-à-vis* their social peers (the outward appearance) and to their internalized feeling of truly being better than others in all aspects of social life (the inward self-perception). Many of Maximus' instructions concerning, for example, prayer, friendship, and love, find themselves on the cutting line between this external and internal household. Because of the *parvenu* character of Maximus' philosophical communication, the emphasis seems to be on outward appearance rather than on the internal self-perception. Yet there is no reason not to assume that Maximus' self-confident description of philosophy and the aspects of a philosophical life may have encouraged the listeners to eagerly share the Tyrian's smug contempt for the idle behaviour of the masses and to deeply enjoy the pleasant feeling of being a philosopher, a *pepaideumenos*, or simply a good man.

6 Purpose and Meaning

After an overview of the representation of the fields of sophistry, rhetoric, and philosophy, we may confidently conclude that Maximus, like many other intellectuals of his day, is quite conscious of his own precarious position as a philosophical orator. Through an interesting intermingling of tradition and personal appropriation, he advertises a type of active philosophy that can stand the test of the public arena, and may thus serve as an inspiring example for the youngsters in the audience who want to incorporate Maximus' philosophical paradigm into their repertoire. We thus witness the emergence of a self-conscious speaker whose discursive control over the tradition enables him to legitimize his exemplary place in front of a public of philosophical non-specialists.

While these observations obviously pertain to the meaning of the *dialexeis* and their value for the reconstruction of the history of Imperial philosophy, the process of communication between Maximus and his listeners can be anal-

ysed somewhat further, in order to bring out the specific way in which we should read the *dialexeis* in their socio-cultural context. The following concluding pages can be seen as an attempt to investigate the consequences of Maximus' communication for the overall understanding of his way of philosophizing. In this reconstruction, the aim is to describe rather than to judge this particular form and definition of philosophy, as it helps us understand the concrete mechanisms through which adherence to philosophy can authorize a public speaker in a socio-cultural climate where the dynamics of philosophical self-display exceed the context of technical school philosophy.

6.1 *Different Levels of Communication*

I would like to start my discussion of the meaning of Maximus' *dialexeis*, perhaps somewhat surprisingly, with a poem by Horace. Horace's famous second epode contains a praise of the life in the countryside, quite a well-worn *topos* in Greek and Latin literature. What makes it stand out, however, and what has raised conspicuous scholarly attention,[212] are the last four lines of the poem:

> Haec ubi locutus faenerator Alfius,
> iam iam futurus rusticus,
> omnem redegit Idibus pecuniam,
> quaerit Kalendas ponere.
>
> When the usurer Alfius had uttered this
> on the very point of beginning the farmer's life,
> he called in all his funds upon the Ides
> and on the Kalends seeks to put them out again!
>
> HOR. *Ep.* 2.67–70; transl.: C.E. BENNETT

At the very end, Horace gives his poem an interesting twist. Without this commentary, the previous lines could have been interpreted as Horace's own genuine praise of the rustic life, but the attribution of these words to Alfius humorously points to the latter's inconsistency regarding living up to his topical verbal praise.[213]

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212 See the overview in Cipriani (1980), 60–63. Cipriani's interpretation is refuted in Watson (2003), 79–80.

213 For the topical character of this poem and its link with the tradition of rhetorical exercises, see Cairns (1975).

It has been suggested that, under closer scrutiny, the content of the praise in Horace's second epode may already foreshadow the cunning twist of perspective at the end of the poem, as the praise is felt to be fairly topical and over-the-top idealizing.[214] Yet, supposing that we did not have the final four lines of the poem, would the previous content have struck interpreters as thoroughly insincere? Let us assume that Alfius would indeed have composed a poem praising the rustic life, and that we would not know that his verbal utterances are contradicted by his life-style. How could we then determine whether he gives his own truthful opinion? And could we simply call a man like Alfius a liar because he follows a well-established topical tradition that is not fully in accordance with his daily pursuits?[215]

The case of Horace's second epode is merely discussed here to illustrate the difficulties that one may encounter while interpreting the opinion of an author behind the text. One should always bear in mind that people do not necessarily mean or do what they say. Alfius (if we still assume that he himself was the voice behind the praise) may have used the typical discourse that praises life on the land because he wants to show that he *knows* the traditional discourse concerning this topic, and because it may have been *chic* to cultivate a preference for rural escapism. This indicates that we should at least consider the possibility that there are certain social reasons to allow for a gap to exist between one's discourse and one's actual behaviour.

It is time now to apply this hypothesis to Maximus of Tyre, a persona whose texts have not come to us with an external commentary (as Horace's on Alfius' speech) on how to read them. To what extent can we interpret *Maximus*' words at face value? I argue that Maximus anticipates a reception of his words that does not only take into account the philosophical message, but also the level of eloquent discursive display of philosophical knowledge. In other words, while listeners could of course use Maximus' *dialexeis* as a resource for concrete instruction concerning ethics and physics, these orations also partly call for an interpretative detachment from the philosophical message and highlight the importance of the entertaining rhetorical form in which they are made public. What is meant by that will be made clear in the following paragraphs.

When someone says "Plato says that pleasure is generally to be avoided", there are at least two possible intended speech acts that this sentence can perform. The first would be "you (the audience) must avoid pleasure, simply

214 See Watson (2003), 80–86.

215 See, on this last question, the valuable comments by Heyworth (1988).

because Plato—who is an authoritative figure who had good reasons for doing so—says it." This meaning of the sentence must then be situated in a framework of ethical instruction, in that the message that is put forward is actually to be taken at face value. The speaker is here only involved in the speech act to such an extent as to invoke Plato's authority to convince his audience of an opinion that he shares with Plato (provided that he does not misrepresent Plato's authority).

There is, however, also a second possible speech act, which could generate the following meaning: "I (the speaker) know that Plato says that pleasure is generally to be avoided, and therefore you (the audience) should respect me as a knowledgeable person."[216] The speaker shows a greater involvement in the communication of his message, and tries to convince his audience of his own elevated status. Of course, both the former and the latter meaning may often simultaneously be implied, as both the message and the position of the speaker are issues with which every public performer inextricably must deal.

The latter level of communication is what traditionally separates epideictic rhetoric from forensic and deliberative rhetoric, although I believe that both levels are in fact operative in all the three *genera*. What basically separates epideictic rhetoric from the other two genres, is that in epideictic rhetoric the message is often more trivial (e.g., when one composes an encomium on hair, like Dio Chrysostom) or more topical (e.g., when one gives a funeral speech), which almost automatically encourages the listeners to pay attention to the speaker instead, focusing largely on his verbal elaborations and his knowledge of the standardized procedures. In this respect, the remark "you spoke very well" (which is rather a speaker-related than a message-related appreciation) is more likely to occur as a proper response to an epideictic speech, whereas a forensic or deliberative oration will often be praised in terms such as "I think you are right" (which focuses more on the message than on the speaker's rhetorical merits).

Second Sophistic declamation exercises such as the *meletai*, which had largely lost their direct political relevance but still remained important for the rhetorical credibility of the Imperial performers, quite naturally pull the audi-

216 One could label this as a 'sub'textual or 'con'textual meaning, in that it forms a meaningful level that surpasses the level of text-related communication. What is communicated in this layer of meaning remains largely implicit. One could compare this to the subversive rhetorical device of double-speak, which is brilliantly described for the Imperial period in Bartsch (1994).

ence's attention away from the content of the speech and towards the rhetorical handling of the theme by the speaker in front of them, precisely because the public can more or less predict which arguments will be put forward, as these have become common knowledge to every *pepaideumenos*.[217] Through their rhetorical education and through attendance at public performances, a Second Sophistic audience was thus made familiar with evaluating a speech as much (if not more) on the basis of the rhetorical merits of the speaker as on the basis of the actual content of what was being said.[218]

Maximus' *dialexeis*, the rhetorical form of which must have reminded the audience of the context of other public performances, must have been received by the audience on both the level of philosophical content and on the level of rhetorical elaboration, even if Maximus will quite often define the latter as subordinate to the former. After all, if Maximus wants to conform himself to traditional philosophical conceptions in order to legitimize his position as a connoisseur of philosophy, he cannot but discursively downplay the value of his rhetorical embellishments, even if these may contribute quite significantly to the persuasiveness of his discourse in the eyes of his audience. Throughout this twofold type of communication,[219] he avoids being seen by his audience as a mere imposter who does not seem to take philosophy seriously, but at the same time avoids castigating this same audience if they merely regard the philosophy of the *dialexeis* as an agreeable pastime or a fruitful addition to their overall education, rather than as a proper end in itself.

We have already made some plausible assumptions about Maximus' audience as (at least partly) consisting of young non-specialists who may equally well be attracted to Maximus' orations for mere entertainment or for the speaker's eloquent handling of his topics. I believe that, in the first oration,

217 See Webb (2006).

218 Cf. Russell (1990), 208: "[Ethos] became even more significant in the literary and rhetorical circumstances of this later period than it had been in the classic age of the Attic orators."

219 This procedure may remind some of the notion of irony, described both in the ancient and the modern meaning by, e.g., Opsomer (1998), 110–113. To this discussion, one may add the insights in Booth (1974). However, the reason why I tend to avoid this term is because of its enormous number of connotations, some of which are hardly desirable to describe the communicational model between Maximus and his audience. To name but one, irony is in some literary theories (especially the New Critics) associated with a high sense of self-reflection, and thus as a prime criterion to distinguish between 'good' avant-garde literature and 'bad' naive literature.

Maximus explicitly hints at such a reception by arguing that people who do not necessarily want to devote themselves entirely to philosophy can benefit from attending his lectures:

> Εἴτε τις ῥητορείας ἐρᾷ, οὗτος αὐτῷ δρόμος λόγου πρόχειρος, καὶ πολυαρκής, καὶ εὔπορος, καὶ ὑψηλός, καὶ ἐκπληκτικός, καὶ ἄρρατος, καὶ ἰσχυρός, καὶ ἄκμητος· εἴτε τις ποιητικῆς ἐρᾷ, ἡκέτω πορισάμενος ἄλλοθεν τὰ μέτρα μόνον, τὴν δὲ ἄλλην χορηγίαν λαμβανέτω ἐντεῦθεν [ἐκ ποιητικῆς], τὸ σοβαρόν, τὸ ἐπιφανές, τὸ λαμπρόν, τὸ γόνιμον, τὸ ἔνθεον, τὴν οἰκονομίαν, τὴν δραματουργίαν, τὸ κατὰ τὰς φωνὰς ἀταμίευτον, τὸ κατὰ τὴν ἁρμονίαν ἄπταιστον. Ἀλλὰ πολιτικῆς καὶ τῆς περὶ δήμους καὶ βουλευτήρια παρασκευῆς ἥκεις ἐνδεὴς ὤν; Σὺ μὲν καὶ πεφώρακας τὸ ἔργον, ὁρᾷς τὸν δῆμον, ὁρᾷς τὸ βουλευτήριον, τὸν λέγοντα, τὴν πειθώ, τὸ κράτος.
>
> If there is anyone among you who desires to be an orator, here is a ready flow of words for him, rich and resourceful, lofty, striking, unhesitant, firm, indefatigable. If there is anyone who desires to be a poet, let him bring metre alone from another source; he will find here all the rest of the poet's stock-in-trade: impressive diction, brilliant and distinguished style, fertility, mastery of composition, dramaturgic skill, rich sound, and faultless harmony. Or again, is it political skill you come in search of? Do you wish to be equipped for assemblies and the council chamber? You have found what you need: here are people, council chamber, speaker, persuasion, and power.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 1.7

An orator may not pay attention to what is actually said, but rather to *how* it is said. Similarly, a poet may benefit from attending Maximus' lectures not for their philosophical content, but for the rhetorical value of the speeches, to which he only needs to add poetic rhythm, it seems, for a successful composition. The last category addressed, that of the politicians, is explicitly encouraged to see Maximus' performances as a sort of case study for their own political speeches. Maximus points out that every element which they need to imagine themselves standing in front of the council is present in his philosophical lectures. All they need to do is to exchange the exclusively philosophical content of the *dialexeis* for the concrete political situation in which they want to act. For all of these three categories, listening to Maximus seems a proper preparation for their future pursuits, provided that they make abstraction of what is said and look at *how* it is said. This passage thus seems to function as an open invitation to come to see this philosophical performer for all he has to offer,

and not just for the philosophical message that he conveys. Even if the next couple of sentences of this oration suggest that Maximus hopes that his audience will eventually be won over for his philosophy, this very assertion strongly anticipates a performative context in which more than the strict philosophical message is being scrutinized.

There are good reasons why these types of statements do not appear throughout all of Maximus' oeuvre. Obviously, if Maximus pointed out too frequently that the philosophical content is not the only good reason to attend his speeches—and thus violated one of the main conventions of traditional philosophy—his audience (and, of course, the wider social environment) could suspect that he turns out not to be a typical philosopher after all, which would be damaging to his ethos.[220] For this reason, it is quite understandable that the *dialexeis* are not stuffed with metapoetic statements that place question marks over the sincerity of the philosophical messages that Maximus communicates. It is as if Maximus loyally follows the pivotal elements of philosophical discourse throughout his oeuvre, but not without first giving some commentary on the proper reception of the subsequent speeches. If we allow ourselves to assume that the *dialexeis* present us with a philosophical course that expects its listeners to surmount the level of accidental bystanders and actually return to the Tyrian for a full education, it is not absurd to think that the introductory speech contains some programmatic guiding elements that do not need abundant repetition in the subsequent orations.

In order to get to the actual meaning of the *dialexeis* as it is generated in Maximus' concrete communication with his audience, we probably need an interpretation that partly detaches itself from the literal meaning of philosophical content and also takes into account the entertaining value of Maximus' rhetoric and the potential for a particular form of philosophical education. Such a reading may help us explain the discursive inconsistencies of the *dialexeis* in a way that does *not* presuppose Maximus' programmatic adherence to Sceptical thought, and may also assist in assessing Maximus' way of philosophizing and educating. This in turn may help us understand the rhetorical purpose of the *dialexeis*, both for the speaker and for his audience.

220 Cf. König (2011), who, discussing Plutarch's *Table Talk*, explains these dynamics as the tension between self-promotion and self-effacement, which can also be observed as an authorial pose in 'scientific' writing in general.

6.2 *Discursive Inconsistencies*

As already argued, the *dissoi logoi* in Maximus' corpus do not compensate for the overall affirmative doctrinal tone in the *dialexeis*, and they should rather be seen as a suitable discursive form to display the speaker's wide grasp on philosophical matters. In other words, while, on the level of literal content, the philosophical message is not always consistently communicated to Maximus' audience, consistency is maintained over the boundaries of individual *dialexeis* through their cumulative aptitude to show the speaker's broad knowledge of the field of philosophy, which appears to enable him to demonstrate his knowledge of alternative modes of argumentation. It is this level of authorial self-authorization that discloses a consistent reading of Maximus' inconsistencies.

It is worthwhile to illustrate this interpretative resolution for Maximus' apparent inconsistencies by taking a closer look at the thirty-sixth oration, which deals with the Cynical life and contains a praise of the golden age and Diogenes' lifestyle in the iron age. This *dialexis* discursively stands apart from the others, in that the Cynic Diogenes, who is generally at best treated as a philosopher among many others, suddenly becomes the main focus of this oration, even to such an extent that the other traditional authorities, who are generally revered and authorized, are accordingly portrayed in a less exemplary fashion.

> Τίνα γὰρ ἄν τις καὶ φαίη τούτων ἐλεύθερον; (…) Τὸν φιλόσοφον; Ποῖον λέγεις; Ἐπαινῶ μὲν γὰρ καὶ Σωκράτην, ἀλλ' ἀκούω λέγοντος "πείθομαι τῷ νόμῳ, καὶ ἑκὼν ἐπὶ τὸ δεσμωτήριον ἄπειμι, καὶ λαμβάνω τὸ φάρμακον ἑκών." Ὦ Σώκρατες, ὁρᾷς τί φῄς; Ἑκών, ἢ πρὸς ἀκουσίους τύχας εὐπρεπῶς ἵστασαι; "Πειθόμενος νόμῳ" τίνι; Εἰ μὲν γὰρ τῷ τοῦ Διός, ἐπαινῶ τὸν νομοθέτην· εἰ δὲ τῷ Σόλωνος, τί βελτίων ἦν Σόλων Σωκράτους; Ἀποκρινάσθω μοι καὶ Πλάτων ὑπὲρ φιλοσοφίας, εἰ μηδεὶς αὐτὴν ἐπετάραξεν, μὴ Δίων φεύγων, μὴ Διονύσιος ἀπειλῶν, μὴ τὰ Σικελικὰ καὶ τὰ Ἰόνια πελάγη ἄνω καὶ κάτω πρὸς ἀνάγκην διαπλεόμενα. Κἂν ἐπὶ Ξενοφῶντα ἔλθω, βίον καὶ τοῦτον ὁρῶ μεστὸν πλάνης, καὶ τύχης ἀμφιβόλου, καὶ στρατιᾶς κατηναγκασμένης, καὶ στρατηγίας ἀκουσίου, καὶ φυγῆς εὐπρέπους. Ταύτα⟨ς⟩ τοίνυν φημὶ τὰς περιστάσεις διαφεύγειν ἐκεῖνον τὸν βίον, δι' ὃν καὶ Διογένης ὑψηλότερος ἦν καὶ Λυκούργου καὶ Σόλωνος καὶ Ἀρταξέρξου καὶ Ἀλεξάνδρου, καὶ ἐλευθερώτερος αὐτοῦ τοῦ Σωκράτους, οὐ δικαστηρίῳ ὑπαχθείς, οὐδὲ ἐν δεσμωτηρίῳ κείμενος, οὐδὲ ἐκ τῶν συμφορῶν ἐπαινούμενος.

> Which of them could one say is a free man? [*There follows a list of types of people, including the demagogue, the orator, the tyrant, the general, and the voyager by sea. All of them receive a proper refutation*] The philosopher?

> Which one do you mean? I admire Socrates along with the rest, but I hear him say, "I obey the law and go willingly to prison and willingly take the poison." Socrates, do you see what you are saying? Do you do this willingly, or are you making a seemly stand against a fate you would not yourself have chosen? What law is it that you obey? If it is Zeus' law, then I praise its maker. But if it is Solon's, how is Solon superior to Socrates? Let Plato too answer me on philosophy's behalf, and tell me whether nothing caused him consternation—not Dion's exile, nor Dionysius' threats, nor the Sicilian and Ionian seas, which he was forced to sail this way and that. And if I turn to Xenophon, here too I see a life full of wanderings and uncertain fortune and forced campaigning and unwilling command and speciously disguised retreat. These are the hostile circumstances that I declare were escaped by the life that made Diogenes superior to Lycurgus and Solon and Artoxerxes and Alexander, and freer even than Socrates—for he was not brought before no court, confined in no prison, and praised for something other than his misfortunes.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 36.6

The critique on Socrates, Plato, Xenophon and Solon seems fairly remarkable here. It can probably not be explained away, however, by considering Maximus a crypto-Cynic,[221] for the discourse of the other *dialexeis* appears to affirm Maximus' preference for Socrates and Plato as authoritative figures.[222] Moreover, in the fifteenth (§ 9) and the thirty-forth (§ 9) orations, Diogenes is listed among philosophers such as Plato, Xenophon and Socrates, and they are apparently all treated as equally authoritative.[223] Therefore, apart from the passage cited above, we have no indication whatsoever that Maximus gave Diogenes an especially special place among the philosophers whom he considered important and authoritative throughout the rest of the *dialexeis*.

A better explanation for this apparent discursive inconsistency may present itself when we read the passage in a way quite similar to the *dissoi logoi*. We witness a speaker who is willing to devote his entire arsenal of reasoned arguments to the case that he is pleading at that particular moment. In Maximus' praise

221 A case for such a view is made in Koniaris (1983), 232 sqq., although the author still expresses his doubt in the final conclusion.

222 Diogenes is mentioned only 22 times in the entire corpus of the *dialexeis*, whereas Plato's name occurs 39 times (the titles of the orations not included) and Socrates' name no less than 122 times.

223 See Trapp (1997a), 289 n. 38.

of Diogenes, which he either chose himself or which was forced upon him by his audience, he does all he can to make his subject stand out against the other authoritative figures by emphasizing the particular philosophical virtue that characterizes Diogenes and his school the most, viz. freedom.

Maximus thus appears to present his public with an overview of topical arguments in praise of Diogenes. In Maximus' communication with his audience, this *speaking about* Diogenes was probably regarded as more imperative than actually following Diogenes' lifestyle. It is not because an audience took no direct interest in becoming a Cynic that it could not have been interested in concrete discursive examples to use in case they ever considered it fit to deliver a verbal praise on Diogenes' life. It is tantalizing to see Maximus' speech delivery as doing just that, communicating philosophical knowledge that does not necessarily reflect one's own deepest convictions, but is through the mere communication of it proven to be part of one's philosophical repertoire. If we thus interpret Maximus' praise of the Cynic life as a useful addition that rounds out his general demonstration of the field of philosophy, the discursive shift displayed in order for this praise to work actually becomes very purposeful.

6.3 *The Philosophy of Knowledge*

In Maximus' twenty-sixth oration *On Homer*, the Tyrian gives a fairly remarkable definition of philosophy:

> Ταύτην [sc. τὴν φιλοσοφίαν] δὲ τί ἄλλο ὑπολῃψόμεθα ἢ ἐπιστήμην ἀκριβῆ θείων τε πέρι ⟨καὶ⟩ ἀνθρωπίνων, χορηγὸν ἀρετῆς, καὶ λογισμῶν καλῶν, καὶ ἁρμονίας βίου, καὶ ἐπιτηδευμάτων δεξιῶν.
>
> And how are we to understand Philosophy, if not as detailed knowledge of matters divine and human, the source of Virtue and noble thoughts and a harmonious style of life and sophisticated habits?
>
> MAX. *Or.* 26.1

Probably without realizing, Maximus gives a definition that is quite typical of his overall approach to the concept of philosophy. Indeed, Maximus follows the traditional definition, which probably originated from the Stoa but was by Imperial times accepted by all schools;[224] however, Maximus' fairly common-sense definition is not that of φιλοσοφία, but σοφία, wisdom. Traditionally, phi-

224 See the references in Beaujeu (1973), 289 n. 5; Whittaker (1990), 73 n. 5; and Trapp (1997a), 215. For the alleged mistake of confusing philosophy with wisdom, see Sen. *Ep.* 89.6.

losophy is defined as a yearning for wisdom rather than wisdom itself.[225] Not so, however, in Maximus' definition. Moreover, in the first paragraph of his sixth oration *On knowledge*, Maximus quite typically claims to make no definite conceptual difference between knowledge (ἐπιστήμη) and wisdom (σοφία), except perhaps that the former is human and the latter divine. Thus, in Maximus' orations, the focal concept of philosophy has shifted from a mental disposition aimed at insight, to a matter of pure knowledge that can be acquired through the study of ancient texts and figures. Given Maximus' emphasis on the tradition as a constitutive part of his philosophical ethos, it appears that the possession and transmission of philosophical knowledge is a more important factor in his *dialexeis* than a genuine and tentative search for the truth.

What certainly inspired his approach to philosophy is the highly performative nature of his speeches, which brings these texts into close connection with the realm of public performances. In the type of philosophizing performed in Maximus' *dialexeis*, we may observe how philosophy has become part and parcel of the public culture in which general *paideia* was a major factor in gaining symbolic capital. This makes Maximus' texts a valuable source to highlight how the field of philosophy can undergo the influence of the general performative climate of the Second Sophistic to the extent that it has inscribed itself in the economy of knowledge as cultivated by the great sophistic performers of the Imperial era.[226]

This means that some dynamics typical of a culture in which verbal performance was very important also pertain to Maximus' philosophizing. The characteristics of knowledge as displayed during public performances, which basically forced the performers to develop a functional way of dealing with authoritative literature, can therefore also be recognized in Maximus' philosophical speeches. As a result, Maximus' use of the tradition closely resembles that of the sophistic orators of his day, in that there appears to be a fairly restricted canon of texts and authors to which he refers, and it is hard to determine whether this is due to Maximus' own lack of wider education or to his attempt to offer accessible speeches to a less educated audience.[227] Similarly,

225 For this point, with references to relevant philosophical texts, see Lauwers—Roskam (2012). Notice, however, that knowledge is definitely not entirely absent from ancient concepts of philosophy, as a virtuous life is directly based on informed reflection and knowledge of the truth. Cf. Siep (2005), 83: "According to both the Socratic and the Aristotelian traditions, virtue is a kind of knowledge."

226 Cf. Morgan (1998), 265: "Wisdom gives the wise man authority in society, not an escape from it; education acts as an index of citizenship and social integration."

227 Cf. Trapp (1997a), xxxvii.

Maximus' references to literature have been condensed to the point where the experience of actually reading a work like Homer's *Iliad* has largely been replaced by a set of factual things to know about Homer and his work in order to make a cultivated impression. Look, for instance, how Maximus turns the characters of Homer's *Iliad* into stereotypes of emotions or ways of acting.

> Πάλιν αὖ ἐπανίωμεν ἐπὶ τὸν Ὅμηρον καὶ τοὺς παρ' αὐτῷ βαρβάρους, καὶ γὰρ ἐνταῦθα ὄψει ἀρετὴν καὶ κακίαν ἀντιτεταγμένας ἀλλήλαις, ἀκόλαστον μὲν τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον, σώφρονα δὲ τὸν Ἕκτορα· δειλὸν τὸν Ἀλέξανδρον, ἀνδρεῖον τὸν Ἕκτορα. Κἂν τοὺς γάμους αὐτῶν ἐξετάζῃς, ὁ μὲν ζηλωτός, ὁ δὲ ἐλεεινός· ὁ μὲν ἐπάρατος, ὁ δὲ ἐπαινετός· ὁ μὲν μοιχικός, ὁ δὲ νόμιμος. Θέασαι δὲ καὶ τὰς ἄλλας ἀρετὰς νενεμημένας κατ' ἄνδρα, τὴν μὲν ἀνδρείαν κατὰ τὸν Αἴαντα, τὴν δὲ ἀγχίνοιαν κατὰ τὸν Ὀδυσσέα, τὸ δὲ θάρσος κατὰ τὸν Διομήδην, τὴν δὲ εὐβουλίαν κατὰ τὸν ⟨Νέστορα·⟩ Ὀδυσσέα αὐτὸν οὗτος ἄρα εἰκόνα ἡμῖν ὑποτίθεται χρηστοῦ βίου καὶ ἀρετῆς ἀκριβοῦς, ὥστε καὶ ἀπέδωκεν αὐτῷ ἥμισυ μέρος τῶν αὐτοῦ ἔργων. Καὶ ταῦτα μέν, ὡς συλλήβδην εἰπεῖν, ἴχνη βραχέα μακρῶν λόγων.
>
> Let us return to Homer, and to the barbarians[228] in his poem. Here too you will see Virtue and Vice ranged against each other: Paris the profligate, the sober Hector; Paris the coward, Hector the hero. You can compare their marriages too: admirable versus pitiable; accursed versus acclaimed; adulterous versus legitimate. Consider too how the other virtues are shared out character by character: bravery to Ajax, acuity to Odysseus, courage to Diomedes, good counsel to ⟨Nestor. And as for⟩ Odysseus, Homer presents him to us as such a model of the good life and of perfect virtue, that he actually makes him the subject of one-half of all his poetry. All these, in short, are a concise indication of what ought to receive a much longer treatment.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 26.6

One can imagine how this sort of knowledge could be schematized into a certain grid, which can be easily memorized and reproduced whenever the need for it was felt;[229] or better yet, how an audience already provided with such a

228 Trapp's translation is right in identifying the barbarians with the Trojans, but it is interesting to see how in this Homeric case, barbarians are apparently not associated with a lack of virtuous behaviour, as there are obviously also exemplary forms of behaviour among the Trojans, as the passage goes on to argue.

229 See Van Rossum-Steenbeek (1998), *passim*, esp. 119–151 on literary and mythological catalogues documented in papyri. For the importance of the condensation of knowledge

type of schematized information through its basic education gets an exemplary demonstration of how such references can be put to use in a concrete performative context.

That these characteristics are connected to the oral performative nature of the *dialexeis* may already appear from the contrast with the philosophical commentary, whose appearance urged its readers to read the text under scrutiny very thorougly and diligently. Maximus' performed speeches present a concept of philosophy that is obviously more in line with the performative world of the Second Sophistic.[230]

From a social angle, it is quite comprehensible why this type of philosophizing could attract a certain class of citizens. After all, the lively atmosphere of a public performance, in which the contact between a speaker and his audience is very close and direct, was probably, for many people, a more agreeable form of extending their knowledge than the time-consuming task of leafing (or better, scrolling) through books all by themselves. A speaker like Maximus provided a functional selection of relevant aspects of philosophy that could readily be adopted into a listener's repertoire. On top of that, the overtly rhetorical form of the *dialexeis* must have had some entertaining potential along with its apparent usefulness. Yet the fact that the matters discussed all have a serious philosophical flavour made it probably a pleasant form of pastime about which an attendant should not feel guilty. Since the marriage of rhetorical form and philosophical content has the potential to please the aesthetic as well as the intellectual senses of the attendants, this combination probably made Maximus' speeches quite a credible form of amusement, but amusement nonetheless.

6.4 *Imitation and Repetition*

Still, the function of the *dialexeis* probably went beyond the level of pure *divertimento*. As Maximus' introductory speech indicates, the public may have wanted to receive some education as well in order to be able to display the

in Imperial culture, see the contribution in König—Whitmarsh (eds.) (2007). In their systematisation of knowledge, the *dialexeis* bear some resemblances to literary forms of knowledge display in the Roman Empire which Morgan (2011) labels as the genre of the miscellany. It is thus obvious that the preference for factual and systematized knowledge can also be observed in Imperial texts that fall outside Morgan's scope.

230 In Lauwers (2011b), I talk more extensively about the consequences of the performative consumption of literature in the Second Sophistic. For a good study of Imperial reading cultures, see Johnson (2010).

aura of a cultivated philosopher. An interesting comparison between Maximus' position and that of a flautist may reveal how he perceived his role in the education of his audience:

> Ἤδη τις καὶ ὑπὸ αὐλημάτων ἀνὴρ ἄμουσος διετέθη μουσικῶς, καὶ τὰ ὦτα ἔναυλος ὢν διαμέμνηται τοῦ μέλους, καὶ μινυρίζει πρὸς αὑτόν. Κἂν τοῦτό τις ὑμῶν τὸ πάθος ζηλωσάτω· τάχα γάρ που ἐρασθήσεται καὶ τῶν αὐλῶν αὐτῶν. Ἀνὴρ φιλοθρέμμων ὄρνιθας εἶχεν τῶν ἡδὺ μὲν φθεγγομένων τὸ ὄρθριον δὴ τοῦτο, ἄσημον δέ, καὶ οἷον ὄρνιθας εἰκός. Ἦν αὐτῷ γείτων αὐλητικός· ἀκροώμενοι δὲ οἱ ὄρνιθες διαμελετωμένου τοῦ αὐλητοῦ, καὶ ἀντᾴδοντες αὐτῷ ὁσημέραι, ἐτυπώθησαν τῇ ἀκοῇ πρὸς τὰ αὐλήματα, καὶ τελευτῶντες, ἀρξαμένου αὐλεῖν, συνεπήχουν πρὸς τὸ ἐνδόσιμον δίκην χοροῦ· ἄνθρωποι δὲ ὄντες οὐδὲ κατὰ ὄρνιθας ξυνᾴσονται ἡμῖν, ἀκούοντες θαμὰ οὐκ ἀσήμων αὐλημάτων, ἀλλὰ νοερῶν *λόγων* καὶ διηρθρωμένων καὶ γονίμων καὶ *πρὸς μίμησιν εὖ πεφυκότων*;
>
> It is not unheard-of for a man of no musical training to acquire the ability simply by listening to the pipe: the tunes so ring in his ears that he gets them by heart, and can hum them back again to himself. It is my prayer that some of you will have the same experience, and perhaps may even come to desire the pipe itself. There was once an animal-lover who kept birds, of the kind that sing pleasantly in that chirping way of theirs, but tunelessly, as you would expect with birds. This man had a neighbour who played the the pipe. Every day the birds listened to the neighbour as he practised, and sang in response; the result was that, through listening to him, their singing was moulded into tune with his singing in unison, taking their keynote from him like a choir. My audience are men, not birds; what they listen to over and again is not inarticulate piping but rationally articulated speech which appeals to the intellect, stimulates its hearers, and is made for imitation.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 1.7

By comparing his audience to birds repeating a song, Maximus clearly indicates that his educational paradigm heavily leans on the imitation of his philosophical lecturing. Given that Maximus' students were in all likelihood instructed along this paradigm in every previous stage of their education, they were probably not surprised to find the concept of *mimesis* as a cornerstone of Maximus' transmission of knowledge as well.[231] Maximus' implied message for his public

231 Cf. Cribiore (2001), 221: "The horizons of a student who was reaching the top of the edu-

of non-specialized philosophers is thus that philosophy can be learned through the same educational mechanisms as other domains of knowledge. Consequently, Maximus' presentation of the comparison between the audience and the birds seems to suggest that the audience does not have to go through a hard and painful healing process to philosophize; they simply have to let Maximus' words wash over them, until they will eventually be able to speak these words themselves. Thus, the imagery of the birds and the flautist presupposes that Maximus' contribution to the audience's education does not end with the plain transmission of relevant knowledge. By embodying a living example for his listeners, he also teaches them how they should treat these philosophical topics in a rhetorical manner, in the same way as he does before their eyes.

In order to assess the importance of the capability of presenting one's philosophical knowledge from a social perspective, it is worthwhile to compare the situation of a citizen of the Roman Empire and that of modern jobseekers. In his book *The Undercover Economist*, Tim Harford paraphrases some interesting ideas by the economist Michael Spence concerning the validity of a degree in philosophy on the job market:

> Spence himself first used his insight to show why students might choose to pursue a degree in philosophy, which is difficult but does not lead to specific career opportunities, like an economics degree or a marketing degree. *Assume that employers would like to hire smart, diligent workers but can't tell from an interview who is smart or diligent.* Assume also that everyone has to work hard to obtain a philosophy degree, but lazy, dumb people find it particularly troublesome.
>
> Spence then shows that smart, diligent people can prove they're smart and diligent by going to the trouble of getting a philosophy degree. It's not that lazy, dumb people can't get that degree but that they wouldn't want to: employers will pay philosophy graduates enough to compensate them for the trouble but not enough to persuade lazy, dumb people to bother. The employers are willing to do this despite the fact that the philosophy

cational hill were much broader than they had been, but the principles that inspired his learning were identical: imitation of a model, honor paid to the written word, reverence for the literary authors and the world of mythology, a strengthening of mnemonic skills in order to retain a patrimony of information, and the application of sets of rules that imprisoned his freedom and inspiration, providing at the same time comfortable and somewhat stimulating paths to follow." Cf. also what Garver (2004), 202 says about Isocrates, which also applies, I believe, to Maximus' approach: "The speeches are designed both to persuade and to illuminate the principles of persuasion."

> degree itself does not improve the candidate's productivity at all. It is merely a credible signal, because a philosophy degree is too much trouble for lazy, dumb people to acquire.
>
> HARFORD 2006, 120; my italics

While these economical viewpoints help us assess the potential social value of the pursuit of philosophy in ancient as well as in modern times, it would be very difficult if not impossible to imagine a similar situation in the Roman Empire as the one emphasized in italics in the text above. The absence of a diploma indicating that one has gone through the harsh task of studying a certain subject implies that, in pre-modern times, the degree of knowledge acquired during the study was only valuable for as far as it could be reproduced on the spot. A Roman citizen who, in search of a public career, wanted to portray himself as an educated man with a sense of philosophical refinery could only do so if he was capable of displaying his knowledge whenever this was needed or desired. Maximus' conception of philosophy as a versatile philosophy of knowledge thus forced the would-be philosophers in the audience to acquire not only the knowledge of philosophical facts, but also the verbal capacities to prove oneself a knowledgeable philosopher in all sorts of public encounters.

All this makes philosophical *paideia* an on-going process of self-fulfilment, a project of a lifetime. As people are bound to forget knowledge that they once acquired, there is a definite need for repetition of relevant knowledge.[232] In our modern times, the need for a well-trained memory and repetitive presentation of knowledge is less heavily felt, as every institutionally educated person can always produce a document proving that he or she once had the knowledge (and is thus still considered) to be an educated man or woman.

One of the prime remedies against the inevitable process of forgetting could be the public performances by speakers such as Maximus. This means that, despite our earlier assertion that Maximus probably aimed his discourses at a fairly young audience, both young beginners and more experienced people may have actually benefited from attending Maximus' lectures, as the latter could have welcomed an entertaining discourse refreshing the type of knowledge in their memory that the former were still acquiring. This also explains why Maximus could frequently return to ancient literature such as Homer (which was already used in the early stages of the youngsters' education), without necessarily raising the audience's annoyance, for they were probably quite

232 For the consequences of the process of forgetting in the light of making a cultivated impression, see Bayard (2007), 47–58.

eager to listen to Maximus' repetitious application of well-known Homeric passages to philosophical issues in order to (re)store these references firmly in their minds. Moreover, it may have been pleasurable for the listeners to detect a passage that they already knew from earlier education, as this could boost their confidence in the overall applicability of *paideia* and create a common ground between the speaker and his audience.[233]

Since Maximus asserts in the passage above that his words are 'well designed for imitation' (λόγων (…) πρὸς μίμησιν εὖ πεφυκότων), his idea of learning through imitation and repetition may also be reflected in the style of his rhetoric. Some textual features that inspire boredom in many modern-day readers (the predictable sentence structure, the parallelisms, the repetition, the endless amplifications) in fact serve the mimetic goal with which Maximus must have delivered his speeches. His Atticizing language is fairly simple and relaxed, with a general preference for short clauses and clearly ordered sentences, in which grammatical juxtaposition is generally favoured over ingenious periodic structuring.[234] Look, for instance, at the syntactical analysis of this fairly randomly chosen Maximean sentence:

> Δῃουμένης δὲ τῆς γῆς,
> καὶ φθειρομένης τῆς πόλεως,
> καὶ ἀναλισκομένων τῶν σωμάτων,
> καὶ μαραινομένης τῆς δυνάμεως,
> καὶ ἀπαγορεύοντος τῇ πόλει τοῦ σώματος,

εἷς ἀνήρ,

> οἷον ψύχη πόλεως,

ὁ Περικλῆς ἐκεῖνος,
ἄνοσος καὶ ὑγιὴς μένων

ἐξώρθου τὴν πόλιν
καὶ ἀνίστη
καὶ ἀνεζωπύρει
καὶ ἀντετάττετο τῷ λοιμῷ καὶ τῷ πολέμῳ.

233 See Schmitz (1997), 168–175, with examples from Maximus on 171–172.
234 Cf. Trapp (1997a), xxxiv.

> As the land of Attica was laid waste and the city worn down, as its citizens perished and its power withered away—in short, as the city's body failed—one man, the great Pericles, remained unafflicted and healthy, and thus, like the city's soul, was able to steady it and set it on its feet and inspire it to resist both the Plague and the war.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 7.4

It does not take a well-exercised connoisseur of Greek prose to realize that, in comparison with other Greek intellectuals, both predecessors and contemporaries, Maximus' sentence structure is generally very clear and simple. The function of this simple type of structuring probably went beyond the level of achieving communicational clarity. It also presented the attendants with a clear methodical model that could be learned by more people than a style full of verbal mannerisms, associative sentence structures, and periodic complexities. There were perhaps listeners who had enough talent not to have to rely strictly on these methodical patterns, but since Maximus' public did probably not exclusively consist of the intellectual cream of the crop, some people could do with a style that could be imitated fairly easily and yet enabled one to hold one's own in philosophical or rhetorical debates.

The same care for a style that could quite easily be imitated also appears from the content of Maximus' speeches. Very often, the Tyrian makes use of amplifications of historical examples, literary references and repeated arguments. These amplificatory repetitions are at times so overblown that they no longer seem to add to the persuasiveness of the message, but tend to become an end in their own right. The following example shows how Maximus stuffs one single paragraph with numerous references to Homer and historical facts, some of which are even mentioned in a sustained *praeteritio*:

> Οὐχ ὁρᾷς τοὺς μνηστῆρας νεανικαῖς ἡδοναῖς συγγιγνομένους, πίονας αἶγας κατέδοντας, καὶ σιάλων συῶν ἐμπιμπλαμένους, καὶ αὐλῶν ἀκούοντας, καὶ οἶνον ἀπομισγομένους, καὶ δίσκοις τερπομένους, καὶ αἰγανέας ἱέντας, τίς οὐκ ἂν αὐτοὺς τῆς ἡδονῆς ταύτης ἐμακάρισεν; Ἀλλὰ ὁ μαντικὸς καὶ γνωριστικὸς τοῦ μέλλοντος λέγει
>
> Ἆ δειλοί, τί κακὸν τόδε πάσχετε; Νυκτὶ μὲν ὑμῶν
> εἰλύαται κεφαλαί·
>
> παρὰ πόδας τὸ κακὸν καὶ ἐγγύς. Παρὰ πόδας τὸ κακὸν ἦν καὶ Ἀλεχάνδρῳ, τῷ τὴν θαυμαστὴν ἐκείνην ἡδονὴν ἐκ Πελοποννήσου ἐκκλέψαντι, ταχὺ γὰρ ἐπ' αὐτῇ στόλος ἐξηρτύθη Ἑλληνικός, μυρίας μὲν ὀδύνας αὐτῷ, τῷ τῆς ἡδονῆς ἐρα-

στῇ, ἄγων, μυρίας δὲ τῇ ξυμπάσῃ πόλει. Τὰς δὲ Ἀσσυρίους ἡδονὰς οὐ λέγω, ἃς κατέλαβεν εὐθὺ⟨ς⟩ πῦρ αὐτῷ χρυσῷ καὶ αὐταῖς παλλακίσιν. Οὐδὲ τὰς Πολυκράτους, τὰς Ἰωνικάς λέγω, ἃς κατέλαβεν οὐδὲ εὐσχήμων θάνατος. Πλήρης ἦν Σύβαρις ἡδονῶν, ἀλλὰ ἀπώλοντο μετὰ τῶν χρησαμένων αἱ ἡδοναί. Εὐδοκίμουν καὶ παρὰ Συρακοσίοις ἡδοναί, ἀλλὰ ἐσωφρόνισαν αὐτοὺς μετ' ἐκείνας αἱ συμφοραί. Ἀλλ' †οὐδὲ Κορινθίοις†.[235]

Do you not see the suitors indulging in their youthful pleasures, wolfing down plump goats, gorging themselves on fat hogs, listening to the bard, drawing and mixing themselves wine, playing with discuses and throwing-spears? Who would not think them fortunate in their pleasure? But the prophet, the man who knows what is to come, cries

> You wretches, what evil fate is this you suffer? Your heads
> Are swathed in darkness,

disaster lies before you, close at hand. Close at hand was disaster for Alexander too, when he stole his marvellous pleasure from the Peloponnese. In no time a Greek expedition was fitted out to reclaim her, bringing countless pains to the pleasure-lover himself, and countless more to his whole city. I will pass over the Assyrian's pleasures, which were quickly overtaken by fire—gold, concubines, and all. And I will pass over, too, the Ionian pleasures of Polycrates, overtaken as they were by a most unseemly death. Sybaris was full of pleasures, but the pleasures perished along with those who indulged in them. Pleasures had a high esteem among the Syracusans, but the Syracusans were chastened by the disasters that followed them. Nor did even the Corinthians ⟨…⟩

MAX. *Or.* 30.5

Just like the formal structure of Maximus' language and sentences (which is again very simple in the first part of this excerpt), this characteristic of Maximus' style can also be linked to the imitational goal of the *dialexeis*, in that it must have been easier for a non-expert to dazzle an audience with a variety of clever references than to entertain them with a highly technical exposition of a problematic point in philosophical doctrine. Again, more talented men in the audience may have preferred to cut down on the historical references and

235 The text suddenly breaks off here. Was the scribe writing down the text perhaps fed up with Maximus' countless amplifications?

wanted to pay more attention to philosophical particularities, but Maximus' style was probably directed to less talented people as well, who could do with a feasible handling of philosophical issues on the basis of their broader knowledge acquired in earlier stages of their education. Maximus seems thoroughly aware of his listeners' preoccupation with the performance of knowledge during social encounters,[236] and offers them a speaking style that they can imitate quite easily and methodically in order to succeed in upholding a philosophical aura on performative occasions.

That such an amplificatory and clearly structured treatment was not the only way of dealing with philosophical problems in the Roman Empire, may become apparent through a comparison between Maximus' style and the instructions of another Imperial philosopher, Musonius Rufus. Indeed, a significant point of contrast with Maximus' approach to references and illustrations can be found in Musonius' first *diatribe*,[237] which is transmitted by Stobaeus. In this text, Musonius argues that there is no need for a large number of illustrations to make a philosophical point:

> Λόγου δέ ποτε γενομένου περὶ ἀποδείξεων,[238] ἃς χρὴ ἀκούειν τοὺς νέους παρὰ τῶν φιλοσόφων πρὸς κατάληψιν ὧν μανθάνουσιν, ἔφη ὁ Μουσώνιος οὐχὶ πολλὰς ἐφ' ἑκάστου πράγματος ζητεῖν ἀποδείξεις προσήκειν, ἀλλ' ἀνυσίμους καὶ ἐναργεῖς. Οὔτε γὰρ ἰατρὸς ἐκεῖνος, ἔφη, ἐπαινετὸς ὁ φάρμακα πολλὰ προσφέρων τοῖς νοσοῦσιν, ἀλλ' ὁ δι' ὀλίγων ὧν προσφέρει λόγου ἀξίως ὠφελῶν. Οὔτε φιλόσοφος ὁ διὰ πολλῶν ἀποδείξεων διδάσκων τοὺς ἀκούοντας, ἀλλ' ὁ δι' ὀλίγων ἐπάγων αὐτοὺς ἐφ' ὃ μέντοι βούλεται· καὶ ὁ ἀκουστὴς ὅσῳπερ ἂν ᾖ συνετώτερος, τοσούτῳ μειόνων δεήσεται τῶν ἀποδείξεων καὶ τοσούτῳ θᾶττον συναινέσει τῷ κεφαλαίῳ τοῦ λόγου, ὄντι γε ὑγιεῖ.

236 König (2008), 88 links this phenomenon to the popularity of the sympotic form in Imperial literature: "(…) the sympotic form in Imperial Greek writing is concerned with *active* treatment of inherited knowledge, which enacts continuity with and inheritance of the past while also reshaping for its new context."

237 Hense (ed.) (1905), 1sqq.

238 The term ἀπόδειξις is used technically, meaning "[*d*]*as durch* argumenta *und* exempla *mit Erfolg erreichte Beweisresultat*" (Lausberg (1990), 194). It is quite remarkable how easily Musonius connects a term with such a clear rhetorical flavour with the beginning stages of philosophical education. This may indicate that philosophy was seen as a subsequent stage in the education of the young, who were quite familiar with rhetorical demonstrations and were, through this horizon, made familiar with philosophical topics. This view suits the aforementioned hypotheses concerning Maximus' position *vis-à-vis* his audience quite well.

> Once when discussion turned upon *demonstrations*, such as beginners must learn from their teachers of philosophy in gaining a mastery of whatever they are studying, Musonius said that there was no sense in seeking many *demonstrations* for each point, but rather cogent and lucid ones. Thus just as the physician who prescribes many drugs for his patients deserves less praise than the one who succeeds in helping them with a few *on a rational basis*, so the philosopher who teaches his pupils with the use of many *demonstrations* is less effective than the one who leads them to the desired goal with few. And the pupil too, the quicker his intelligence, the fewer *demonstrations* he will require, and the sooner he will assent to the *main argument* in question, provided it be sound.
>
> MUS. 1; translation: C.E. LUTZ[239] [with my modifications in italics]

Musonius' standpoint, which is quite different from Maximus' practice, once more indicates that the eventual goal of the *dialexeis* appears to differ significantly from some other philosophical texts of the Imperial era. Leaning on an analogy between philosophy and medicine, Musonius rejects the abundant use of demonstrations because it tends to distract the audience's attention from the philosophical case that one is pleading. For Musonius, the philosophical case is the most important message that needs to be communicated, in as much that every demonstration should be subordinated to it. Moreover, whereas Musonius wants to bring home the point that an intelligent audience does not need a preponderance of demonstrations to understand the core message, Maximus' amplifications may well indicate that his is a fairly paternalistic discourse aimed at a variety of people with different intellectual capacities.

In this respect, the next passage, which immediately follows an anecdote about Midas, offers some insight into Maximus' own conceptions concerning his use of illustrative stories:

> Ἐπαινῶ τὸν μῦθον τῆς χάριτος καὶ τῆς πρὸς τἀληθὲς ὁδοῦ. Τί γὰρ δὴ ἄλλο αἰνίττεται ἢ ἀνοήτου ἀνδρὸς εὐχὴν ἐπ' οὐδενὶ χρηστῷ, εὐχομένου μὲν ἵνα τύχῃ, μεταγιγνώσκοντος δὲ ἐπειδὰν τύχῃ;
>
> I commend this story not only for its charm but also[240] for the truth towards which it directs us. For what is it but an allegory of the misguided

239 Lutz (1947), 33. For a French translation of the entire fragment in Stobaeus, see Jagu (1979), 21–24.

240 This is Trapp's translation, which brings out the contrast between charm and truthfulness more explicitly than the Greek construction with καί. The reason why I did not change the

> prayers of foolish men, who repent the very moment they gain what they have been praying for?
>
> MAX. *Or.* 5.1

Maximus' remark that his anecdote can be praised as a pleasurable embellishment of his discourse (τῆς χάριτος) *and* as a road towards the truth (τῆς πρὸς τἀληθὲς ὁδοῦ) basically implies that the speaker and his audience must have been aware of the entertaining potential of these anecdotes which they apparently possess largely apart from their potential to point to the truth (otherwise, the audience would not need to be encouraged to see the anecdote as a allegorical stepping-stone towards the truth as well). It would probably be unthinkable for Musonius to give an interpretative comment such as this, for his audience would in all likelihood never suspect that the anecdote in question would be smuggled into Musonius' philosophical discourse for entertainment value only. On the basis of this assessment of his own practice, it is sensible to assume that Maximus did not only attribute importance to the philosophical case, but also to the illustrative material that was supposed to be part of the repertoire of every respected and self-respecting *pepaideumenos*.

6.5 *Becoming Greek through Philosophical Education*

In his discursive use of the notion of Greekness to convince his audience of the value of his philosophical paradigm, Maximus proves himself very typical of his cultural environment.[241] As will become clear on the basis of a couple of examples, Maximus generally follows the taste of his time, about which we are informed by numerous sources, either sophistic or philosophical.

First of all, in his discussions of ancient history,[242] Maximus presents himself as a confident philosophical interpreter, transforming the chaotic turns of

translation, however, is because I believe that Trapp's interpretation is correctly motivated by the significant and somewhat remarkable order of the terms, in that charm is here put first, it seems, as the most obvious reason to praise the story, only to be complemented afterwards by its truthfulness.

241 The discussion of Greek identity under Roman domination has probably been the most wide-spread issue in Second Sophistic scholarship. See, for a representative but definitely not exhaustive overview of the field, Bowie (1974), Alcock (1993), Woolf (1994), Goldhill (ed.) (2001), Whitmarsh (2001), Konstan—Saïd (eds.) (2006), Schmitz—Wiater (eds.) (2011), and Richter (2011).

242 Notice that there is in fact little conceptual difference between characters from poetry and historical figures in the *dialexeis*, in that they are all part of the extensive frame of reference from which Maximus could extract his positive or negative examples. See, for a

events and the diverse aspects of human behaviour into a smooth ethical repertoire from where he can freely extract the countless illustrations with which he underpins his philosophical viewpoints.[243] Instead of adopting a more exploratory form of ethics in his treatment of history, like Plutarch in his *Lives*, Maximus self-consciously imposes his confident expository ethics upon his historical subject matter, and presents himself as a reliable guide for those who want to read moral instruction in the capricious twists and turns of history.

In this process of appropriation, the Tyrian tends to underline the exemplarity of the Greeks, while not being blind, of course, to some less exemplary persons from Greek origin, such as the tyrant Pisistratus,[244] the politician and pupil of Socrates, Alcibiades, or the Athenians who put Socrates to death. Despite these historical counter-examples, however, Maximus tends to favour the Greeks and often turns barbaric figures such as Sardanapallus or Xerxes into negative references designed so as to warn the audience against any such behaviour. It can be observed, moreover, that, in contrast with other Imperial authors such as Apuleius, Aristides, or Philostratus, Maximus shows almost no interest in the exotic wisdom from the East, such as India and Egypt. The only example of a barbaric sage in Maximus' *dialexeis* is the Scythian Anacharsis, whose approval of Myson's preference for deeds over words is narrated.[245] With this depiction of Anacharsis as a barbaric sage, Maximus also proves himself quite typical of his cultural environment, as the Imperial Anacharsis appears

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clear example of the combination of historical and poetic references, *Or.* 20.6–7. The main difference between the two is that while history just happened (either or not under divine regulation), poetry is composed so as to contain a purposeful and intentional meaning (which is why Aristotle, in his *Poetics* (51a36), labels poetry as more philosophical than history; moreover, in Max. *Or.* 22.6–7, Maximus himself argues that history is inferior to philosophy, precisely because of the former's moral indifference). The conceptual resemblance between history and poetry is quite easily explained by the fact that, from the Hellenistic era onwards, Greco-Roman education has tended to systematize both historical and poetic references as an important educational tool (see Cribiore (1996), 42–43), which made it possible that rhetorical exercises, designed to prepare an orator for real cases, could also address questions such as 'what would Andromache say about her dead husband Hector?' (see Ps.-Hermogenes in Kennedy (2003), 85).

243 In this respect, Auerbach (1946), 24–27 makes an interesting division between the legendary (where everything is smoothed out in service of one simple narrative) and the historical (which presents the complexities of life and human nature itself). I would argue that Maximus' ethicizing interpretation pushes historical events to the realm of the legendary.

244 See Max. *Or.* 29.2.

245 See Max. *Or.* 25.1.

to have undergone a remarkable transformation from a Scythian who was murdered in his home region after—to the minds of his fellow countrymen—an excessive indulgence in Greek *paideia* (expressed in his worship of the goddess Cybele), to an authoritative sage offering an outsider's perspective on the Greek world, a position from where he either reaffirms or destabilizes the self-evident exemplarity of Greek morals.[246] In his interpretation of Anacharsis as a foreign sage legitimizing good philosophical behaviour, Maximus appears to make an exception to his pro-Greek bias, an exception which was, moreover, thoroughly supported by the fellow intellectuals of his day, and which, on closer inspection, still affirms the exemplarity of the Greeks in the person of Myson.

Maximus' moral prejudices appears all the more clearly when he speaks of 'the Greek' against 'the barbaric' in a more abstract fashion. In the first oration, Maximus refers to lives that people without reason tend to live as "roads of such a sort as 'the barbaric' goes as well."[247] Similarly, in the sixth oration, the divine laws are said to accomplish, among other things, that "nothing is barbaric", and that "all is full of philosophy."[248] In the twenty-second oration, Odysseus' futile praise of vulgar pleasure is castigated as something "that might be approved of by a barbarian."[249] Finally, when Maximus speaks about love, he asserts that a bad lover is barbaric while a good lover is Greek,[250] and that true love does not exist among the barbarians.[251]

As in many of his contemporaries like Lucian[252] or Favorinus,[253] Maximus' pro-Greek bias should not merely be seen as a matter of geographical origin,

246 See, for the latter image of Anacharsis, especially the dialogue between Solon and Anacharsis about Greek athletics in Lucian's *Anacharsis*. For Anacharsis' discursive transformation in Imperial literature, with an extensive discussion of Anacharsis' reception in Herodotus, the Cynical tradition, and Imperial literature, see Richter (2011), 160–176. In comparison with these subtly subversive uses of the figure of Anacharsis, Maximus grants him only a very accessible and straightforward treatment, in the same vein as many of the Greek philosophers whom he discusses in the orations.

247 Max. *Or*. 1.3: "(…) οἵας ὁδοὺς καὶ τὸ βαρβαρικὸν ἔρχεται."

248 Max. *Or*. 6.5: "(…) οὐδὲν (…) βαρβαρικόν, πάντα (…) μεστὰ (…) φιλοσοφίας."

249 Max. *Or*. 22.2: "(…) οἵαν καὶ βάρβαρος ἀνὴρ ἐπαινέσαι."

250 Max. *Or*. 19.4.

251 Max. *Or*. 20.2: "Διόπερ μοι δοκεῖ οὐδὲ ἐν τοῖς βαρβάροις πάνυ τι ἐπιχωριάσαι τὰ τοῦ ἔρωτος."

252 Lucian was himself an Assyrian from Samosata, and does not refrain from pointing that out to his readership (see, e.g., his introduction to the essay *On the Syrian goddess*). However, his ample display of typical Greek *paideia* betrays his ambition to be seen as a proper Greek on the basis of his education.

253 As already discussed in the first chapter, Favorinus saw his exemplary Greekness, despite his origins in Gaul, as one of the three main paradoxes that characterized his life.

but rather as a matter of learning, behaviour, and character. A very apt historical figure to articulate a potential degeneration of identity from Greekness to barbarianism is Alexander the Great. From a strict geographical angle, Alexander is of course a *Macedonian* king, but his pro-Hellenic agenda usually granted him a reception among the Greeks. Nevertheless, his ambitious character is not unambiguous, as it became prone to morally less elevated types of behaviour and also drove him away from Greece into barbaric territory, a coincidence that allows for a conceptual connection between geography and morality. In his discussion of Alexander's character, Arrian already noted how the excessive punishment of some 'Bessus',[254] consisting of the removal of the latter's nose and the tips of his ears, was a sign that Alexander's distant existence from Greece brought about an increasing inclination to flattery and the moral degeneration associated with barbaric manners.[255] Maximus makes a very similar argument about Alexander's moral degeneration:

> Κολακεύουσιν καὶ Ἀλέξανδρον Μακεδόνες. Τῆς δὲ κολακείας τὰ ἔργα· ἀναξυρίδες Περσικαί, καὶ προσκυνήσεις βαρβαρικαί, καὶ λήθη τοῦ Ἡρακλέους, καὶ τοῦ Φιλίππου, καὶ τῶν Ἀργεαδῶν ἑστίας.
>
> Alexander too was flattered by the people of Macedonia; the products of this flattery were Persian trousers and barbarian obeisances and oblivion of Heracles and of Philip and of the ancestral hearths of the Argeadae.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 14.8

Maximus suggests that Alexander is lured into barbarianism by the flattery of his people. He indulges in barbaric practices, forgetting about his traditional origin, which is associated with good moral behaviour (embodied in Heracles, Philip, and the hearths of the Argeadae). Alexander's example seems to suggest that his interest in eastern (barbarian) habits inspired an inner moral corruption, which he accepted by turning away from his Macedonian/Greek roots.

The flexible use of Greekness as a geographic and a moral category does not limit itself to historical examples such as Alexander. In the thirty-third oration, Maximus directly warns his own audience against becoming pleasure-lovers, for this would downgrade them to the level of barbarians:

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254 This is almost certainly a corrupt name (the satrap of Bactra under Darius III is not meant here), but the actual name is irretrievable. Cf. Bosworth (1995), vol. 2, 41–43.

255 See Arr. *Anab.* 4.7.3–4. Other important works staging Alexander are Dio. *Or.* 4, Plut. *Alex.*, where the Macedonian king is paired with Caesar, and two epideictic speeches by the same author entitled *On the fortune and the virtue of Alexander.*

> Παρανομεῖς περὶ τοὺς θεμελίους· οὐδὲν σοφίᾳ καὶ ἡδονῇ κοινόν· ἄλλος μὲν ὁ φιλήδονος, ἄλλος δὲ ὁ φιλόσοφος· διακέκριται τὰ ὀνόματα, διακέκριται τὰ ἔργα, διῄρηται τὰ γένη, ὡς τὰ Λακωνικὰ τῶν Ἀττικῶν, ὡς τὰ βαρβαρικὰ τῶν Ἑλλήνων. Ἐὰν δὲ, Σπαρτιάτης εἶναι λέγων καὶ Ἕλλην καὶ Δωριεὺς καὶ Ἡρακλείδης, θαυμάζῃς τιάραν Μηδικὴν καὶ τράπεζαν βαρβαρικὴν καὶ ἁρμάμαξαν Περσικήν, περσίζεις, βαρβαρίζεις, ἀπολώλεκας τὸν Παυσανίαν· Μῆδος εἶ, Μαρδόνιος εἶ· ἀπόθου τοὔνομα μετὰ τοῦ γένους.
>
> You are in error about the very foundations of the matter. Wisdom and Pleasure have nothing at all in common. The lover of Pleasure and the lover of Wisdom are different people; their names, their deeds, their kinds are separate, as Spartan is separate from Athenian, as foreigner is from Greek. If while claiming to be a Spartiate and a Hellene and a Dorian and a Heraclid, you still admire Median diadems and barbarian feasts and Persian wagons, then you have gone Persian, you have turned barbarian, you have sacrificed Pausanias. You are a Mede, you are a Mardonius. Relinquish the name along with the nationality.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 33.2

The first sentence contains only a mild condemnation of barbarianism, since it is merely stated that barbarian is separate from Greek as Spartan is from Athenian. Given that there is no self-evident prevalence of Athens over Sparta in Maximus' discourse, this passage does not testify to an outspoken cultural prejudice from Maximus' part. Yet the second sentence does betray Maximus' view on the soul's degeneration from Greek to barbarian. People who are corrupted by barbarian conduct and pleasures are no better than these foreign people. Indeed, in spite of their Greek origin, they can become barbarian on the basis of their acts. In Maximus' view, Greek nationality is no stable possession, but something that can be lost if one does not live in accordance with its moral exigencies.

The reverse movement, fortunately, appears to be possible as well. In fact, it is in this 'moral upward mobility' that we see Maximus' philosophical project realized to the full. In a beautiful passage of the ninth oration, Maximus aims to visualize the elevation of the soul:

> Τοιοῦτον ἡ ψυχή· σῶμα ἐν σάλῳ ἀεὶ καὶ κλύδωνι νηχόμενον καὶ κραδαινόμενον καὶ σειόμενον συνέχει αὐτή, καὶ καθορμίζει, καὶ ἵστησιν· ἐπειδὰν δὲ ἀποκάμῃ τὰ νεῦρα ταυτί, καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα, καὶ τὰ ἄλλα τὰ ὥσπερ καλώδια, ἐξ ὧν τέως προσώρμιστο τῇ ψυχῇ τὸ σῶμα, τὰ μὲν ἐφθάρῃ καὶ κατὰ βυθοῦ ᾤχετο, αὐτὴ δὲ ἐφ' ἑαυτῆς ἐκνηξαμένη συνέχει τε αὐτὴν καὶ ἵδρυται. Καὶ καλεῖται ἡ τοιαύτη

> ψυχὴ δαίμων ἤδη, θρέμμα αἰθέριον, *μετοικισθὲν ἐκ γῆς ἐκεῖ, ὥσπερ ἐκ βαρβάρων εἰς Ἕλληνας,* καὶ ἐξ ἀνόμου καὶ τυραννουμένης καὶ στασιωτικῆς πόλεως εἰς εὐνομουμένην καὶ βασιλευομένην καὶ εἰρηνικὴν πόλιν.
>
> It is just the same with the soul, which holds the body together as it wallows in the stormy swell of life, mooring it and steadying it as it is shaken and pounded. But when these sinews of ours grow weary, along with the breath and all the other cables which, as it were, have so far tethered the body to the soul, then the body perishes and sinks into the deep, while the soul, holding itself firmly together, swims free on its own. Such a soul, as it makes the crossing away from the earth, becomes a creature of the air, and is given the name *daimon*. The transition is like one from a foreign country to Greece, or from a lawless and strife-torn city ruled by a cruel tyrant to a peaceful and law-abiding city ruled by a benevolent monarch.[256]
>
> MAX. *Or.* 9.6

The soul cuts itself loose from the body and rises up to the heavens, where it becomes a *daimon*. This process of rising after a person's death is described as the movement from the barbarians to the Greeks. Maximus thus presents a neat resemblance between the elevation of the soul and the permanent relocation (cf. μετοικισθέν) of an individual to Greece. Moreover, as the second comparison highlights, the soul's endpoint (and thus also the land of the Greeks) is associated with peace, laws, and proper governing; in other words, with a just society where it is good to live.

Against the background of Plato's *Phaedo*, which is vaguely referred to a couple of times in Maximus' general discussion here,[257] this passage becomes all the more relevant, as it bridges a conceptual gap between philosophy and Greekness. Given that Socrates' discussion in the *Phaedo* labels the task of philosophy as an exercise in dying, understood as the dissolution of the connection between body and soul (the famous σῶμα σῆμα-doctrine), the philosophical elevation of the soul from its earthly attachment to the body is regarded as a life-long project that enables the true philosopher to find peace in the idea that his body will perish but his soul will live on.[258] In this light, the passage does not

256 Note that Maximus' ideal state, as presented here, is not a democracy. On the Tyrian's contempt for democracy, see chapter 2, section 4a.

257 See Trapp (1997a), 81 n. 10 and 12.

258 Cf. most clearly Pl. *Phdo*. 67b–68b.

restrict itself to a description of the soul after someone's death, but also includes the moral obligation of philosophical self-perfection for a living human being. In other words, Maximus' description of the elevation of the soul as a voyage from the barbarians to the Greeks may also be interpreted as relating to an individual who aspires to become a proper philosopher and thus become 'Greek' as well.[259] Just as Maximus advertises philosophy as an important road to success and happiness, so too does he affirm that the pursuit of moral Greekness can serve as a firm guideline in cultivating the soul and becoming a proper philosopher.

In Maximus' discourse, Greekness is thus not (only) a geographical domain that is merely open to native Greeks. It is (also) a more abstract domain that can be reached through a higher degree of self-perfection in an individual. In the communication with his audience, Maximus' rhetoric shows itself quite invitational and encouraging to those who want to become Greek by acquiring Greek knowledge and by raising one's soul to the level of a proper philosopher. Greek identity is transposed from a geographical coincidence into a self-controlled process of self-fashioning on the basis of knowledge, life, and speech.

Given his thorough representativeness of the tastes and prejudices of his era regarding matters of origin, identity, and morality, Maximus offers only little ground to adjust the general picture of the working of Greekness and *paideia* in the era of the Second Sophistic, yet his case elegantly demonstrates how this pro-Greek propaganda can functionally be exploited for the promotion of philosophy and philosophical education in general, and of Maximus' philosophical paradigm in particular. It is impossible to determine whether Maximus delivered these speeches in the Greek world, trying to appeal to the chauvinistic pride of his listeners in order to persuade them to study philosophy in accordance with their origin, or whether he delivered them in Rome or somewhere else, where he could have tried to persuade his audience that Greekness is definitely not restricted to the Greeks, but extends to every wise man. That being said, it is tempting, though, to read Maximus' orations in a Roman context, as the manuscript tradition suggests, and to regard him as a communi-

259 Quite interestingly, the dynamism that can be perceived in Maximus' concept of 'Greekness' can also be interpreted as 'stability'. Maximus' dynamic portrait of a proper Greek helps maintain the exemplarity of Greekness as a whole, stretching from its origins to the Imperial age. The dynamism I describe here thus depends on the perspective; cf. Preston (2001), 117: "Identity and culture are thus represented as unchanging, connecting the remotest past to the contemporary world."

cator of functional samples of Greek philosophical knowledge through which his Roman audience could aspire to become a Greek philosopher, a Greek *pepaideumenos*, or a Greek *tout court*.

6.6 *Personal Gain and Social Hypocrisy*

In this section, we will comment once again on the potential persuasiveness of Maximus' discourse, this time with a particular focus on the social processes behind the knowledge transmission in the Roman Empire that may have facilitated a successful form of communication between Maximus and his audience. After all, throughout this chapter, there are obvious paradoxes, inconsistencies, and audacious appropriations which thoroughly characterize Maximus' communication with his audience, and in order to understand why these elements did probably not undermine Maximus' position as an authoritative speaker on philosophical matters, it is worthwhile to examine the social processes that may have helped him convince the audience that his speeches were in fact worth attending. The notions of personal gain and social hypocrisy are used not so much to judge these processes as to describe them, in order to understand how and why Maximus' *dialexeis* could have actually worked.

Unlike Epictetus, who, according to Arrian, sometimes actually engaged in a dialogue with individual people in order to refute their viewpoints,[260] Maximus' orations do not seem to have taken place in a setting that invited such critical discourses from individual people. Even if he often addresses his public individually in the second person singular, there are no traces in the written documentation of the *dialexeis* to assume that he tended to single out one particular member of the audience, for such individual addresses can still be directed toward the collective. All in all, the written form in which the *dialexeis* have come down to us seems to suggest that the original performance consisted of a self-confident monological speech delivery in which public intervention was implicitly discouraged. Considering the authoritative position from which Maximus delivers his monological speeches, it may be believed that he could rely on group-related forms of persuasion that may have silenced some possible dissonant voices among the individual members of his audience. Given that people tend to conform to a larger group of which they are a part, and that everyone in the audience may feel the same natural reluctance to stand up and protest against some of Maximus' audacious manipulations of the philosophical repertoire, Maximus may have got away with quite a lot, partly as a result

260 See, e.g., Epict. 3.9.

of the fact that his orations address his audience *as a group* and thus raise the bar rather high for those who would want to make an individual intervention in the discussion.

A notable exception to this general stance can be found in Maximus' first oration, where he challenges the members of his audience to compete with him for glory.

> Εἰ γάρ, ὦ θεοί, ἐμῶν θεατῶν γένοιτό τις συναγωνιστὴς ἐμοί, ἐπὶ ταυτησὶ τῆς ἕδρας συγκονιόμενος καὶ συμπονῶν, ἐγὼ τότε εὐδοκιμῶ, στεφανοῦμαι τότε, κηρύττομαι τότ' ἐν τοῖς Πανέλλησιν. Ἕως δὲ νῦν ἀστεφάνωτος εἶναι ὁμολογῶ καὶ ἀκήρυκτος, *κἂν ὑμεῖς βοᾶτε*. Τί γὰρ ἐμοὶ ὄφελος τῶν πολλῶν λόγων καὶ τῆς συνεχοῦς ταύτης ἀγωνίας; Ἔπαινοι; Ἅλις τούτων ἔχω. Δόξα; Διακορής εἰμι τοῦ χρήματος.
>
> I wish to heaven some fellow competitor might emerge from my audience, to share with me the dust and the exertions of this platform! Then will I win the glory of a victor's wreath; then alone will my name resound in triumph at the Panhellenic games! Until now, I confess, I have remained uncrowned and unproclaimed—shout though you may! What good to me are the many speeches I have made, the continual struggle in which I have engaged? Praise? I have enjoyed enough of that! I have my fine reputation, and am sated with it!
>
> MAX. *Or.* 1.6

It is not hard to imagine how intimidating Maximus' seemingly open invitation must have been to an average member of his audience. By indicating that an opponent would merely be there to demonstrate Maximus' own superiority, the Tyrian simultaneously encourages and discourages any form of intervention. In fact, the audacious 'shout though you may' seems designed as a statement *à la* 'may he speak now or forever hold his peace'. After this sentence, we can almost *feel* a short strategic silence from the speaker's part, which is then referred to by Maximus' γὰρ in the next sentence. Maximus did take a fairly small risk that anyone in the audience would actually seize the opportunity to challenge him, but the absence of any response, partly explained by Maximus' assertive discourse, partly by the audience's philosophical inferiority to the Tyrian, and partly by group-related psychology, installs his staged persona all the more self-confidently as an authoritative performer.

Apart from these performative dynamics, the communication of the *dialexeis* is built, I argue, on a constructive hypocrisy shared by the speaker and his audience. Maximus makes his audience believe that his paradigm is truly philo-

sophical and that he should be trusted as a spokesman of the philosophical tradition. Despite the fairly audacious appropriations of philosophical authorities to his own practice, the audience may have had good social reasons to attribute authority to the speaker, if only because Maximus' philosophy presents itself as a form of philosophy into which they—a public of non-specialists—could buy. It is far from implausible that these listeners truly believed that by honouring Maximus as a proper spokesman for philosophy, his attainable form of philosophy becomes a course through which the members of the audience may eventually claim the title of philosopher for themselves. In other words, for a listener who henceforth wanted to declare "I learned philosophy from Maximus of Tyre", it was of major importance that Maximus was seen as a great authority in his socio-cultural world.

In order to demonstrate how this interrelation between an instructor and his listeners could actually work, an interesting parallel presents itself in a funeral address by Aelius Aristides for his teacher of grammar Alexander, in which Aristides states the following about the deceased:

> Since I was nurtured and educated under him and afterwards eagerly shared with him in everything which fortune offered, I was able to call him foster father, teacher, father, comrade, everything. But the greatest bond between us was that we could be equally proud of one another. I felt self-esteem to have had him as a teacher and he counted my career as part of his own glory.
>
> ARIST. 32.2; transl.: B.A. BEHR

The passage makes every impression of stemming from a sincere sense of grief in Aristides, but simultaneously shows how respect for a master may arise from the prosperity of his pupils, and how a pupil's self-authorization may revolve around his attachment to his master. In fact, both parties seem to benefit from each other, as their staged form of mutual respect and friendship could help both in the process of authorization.

If we transpose this to Maximus' communication with his audience, it seems quite plausible that philosophical authority, as negotiated in the *dialexeis*, rested on a reciprocal process of authorization between the speaker and his audience.[261] This mutual win-win situation must have aided the persuasiveness of Maximus' transmission of knowledge, and thus explains why some

261 For the social dynamics of reciprocity in antiquity, see the collection of essays in Gill—Postlethwaite—Seaford (eds.) (1998).

aspects of Maximus' rhetorical type of philosophy, which are discussed earlier, may not have troubled the audience to such an extent that they wanted to deprive the philosophical instructor before them of his philosophical authority. If the Tyrian could give them the feeling that they were actually getting a grip on the complex field of philosophy, it was in their very interest that Maximus' paradigm was socially respected and defended as proper philosophy.

6.7 *The Rhetorical Moment of the* dialexeis*: Reiteration Becomes Meaning*

As already observed, Second Sophistic poetics itself seems to urge an intellectual to constantly frame his own discursive interventions and innovations on the basis of traditional paradigms and forbearers. The need to show one's *paideia* dominates the literature of this period in such an obvious fashion that it may have stood in the way of some more radical paradigm switches in the fields of literature and philosophy. Quite tellingly, the evolution of Imperial philosophy towards the overarching paradigm of Neo-Platonism indicates the massive influence of Plato's general ideas as well as the submissive mentality of his latter-day followers. Evolution of thought is certainly possible in such an intellectual climate, but only for as far as it is felt as an addition to or a clarification of the traditional authority, even if later research has shown that these appropriations did most definitely not always correspond to Plato's original meanings and intentions.

This reflex, favouring knowledge of the tradition over blunt assertions of innovation, can also be found in Maximus' *dialexeis*, from where it challenges modern presumptions regarding the requirement of new and sparkling ideas for a positive appreciation within the history of philosophy. Maximus is, almost more than any other intellectual known to us from the Imperial period, willing to put aside the urge to complement traditional philosophical knowledge and commonplaces with his own innovations. What he does do—and here he differs remarkably little from, for example, Lucian's authorization of his use of comical dialogue—is to emphasize his own position as a connoisseur of traditional philosophy, as this authorizes his position as a subject-presumed-to-know in front of his audience.

Is there a higher purpose in this radically conservative engagement with the field of philosophy? The very question brings us back to an assessment of Maximus' personality. The analysis above has exposed the programmatic and purposeful nature of Maximus' functional representation of the field of philosophy in service of his own proper self-presentation. For the purpose behind this 'purposeful nature', we have to direct ourselves to the social processes

behind the transmission of (philosophical) knowledge in the context of the Roman Empire.

In his tenth oration *On learning and recollection*, Maximus offers a discussion on the transmission of knowledge:

> Ὅ τε μαθών, παρὰ μὲν τοῦ οὐκ εἰδότος οὐκ ἂν μάθοι, παρὰ δὲ τοῦ εἰδότος κἂν μάθοι· ἐρήσομαι τὸν διδάξαντα, πῶς καὶ οὗτος ἔγνω. Οὐκοῦν καὶ οὗτος ἢ εὗρεν, ἢ ἔμαθεν· καὶ εἰ μὲν εὗρεν, τὰ αὐτὰ ἐρήσομαι, πῶς ἐχρήσατο τῷ εὑρεθέντι μὴ γνωρίσας. Εἰ δὲ ἔμαθεν παρ' ἄλλου, πάλιν ἡδὺ ἐκεῖνον διερέσθαι. Καὶ ποῖ στησόμεθα, ἄλλον ἄλλου διδάσκαλον ἀνερωτῶντες; Ἀφίξεται γάρ ποτε *λογισμὸς προιὼν* ἐπὶ τὸν οὐ μαθόντα, ἀλλ' εὑρόντα· πρὸς ὃν τὰ αὐτὰ ἐκεῖνα ῥητέον.
>
> And when someone learns something, he clearly cannot learn from someone who does not know. But if he learns from someone who does know, then I will ask this teacher of his for the source of *his* knowledge. Did he discover what he knows, or learn it? If he discovered it, then I repeat the same question: how could he do anything with his discovery if he did not recognize it? If on the other hand he learned from someone else, then I have the pleasure of questioning that someone else in his turn. Where will this process of interrogating our sequence of teachers and pupils come to an end? Sooner or later the *chain of reasoning* will bring us to someone who did not learn but discovered for himself, to whom we will have to address the same old question all over again.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 10.5

Even though the remainder of the oration makes it clear that the passage must be seen against the backdrop of Plato's theory of learning as recollection,[262] this view also typically reflects the cultural climate of the Second Sophistic, in which the acquisition of knowledge heavily leaned on the imitation of authoritative examples. Moreover, Maximus' overt preference for ancient sources throughout his speeches seems to imply that the authoritative discoverers of insights are not so much to be sought among Maximus' contemporaries as in older documents and persons. He does not conceive knowledge as something

262 The most illustrative accounts of this theory can be found in Plato's *Meno*, *Theaetetus*, and *Phaedo*. In the light of this epistemological theory, 'finding' in this passage is not to be understood as 'discovering *ex nihilo*', but rather as 'recollecting something and subsequently communicating this insight to another person', whose knowledge concerning the 'discovered' insight is then reawakened again.

that is being developed progressively (the Enlightenment is still far away), but rather something that has been handed down by tradition and can be traced back to an original source of wisdom. As his fourth and thirty-sixth oration indicate, Maximus seems to believe that culture is in fact degenerating, a process which can be stopped or slowed down by the transmission and proper interpretation of knowledge from the past.

This transmission of knowledge appears to take on the form of a chain through which knowledge passes on from one generation to another, and which has to be traced back in order to find the original discoverer. The 'chain of reasoning', used by Trapp to translate the Greek λογισμός προιών in the citation above (which makes Maximus' implicit imagery more explicit), is a neat metaphor to capture this continuous phenomenon, for it illustrates that cultural signification does not begin or end with Maximus' speeches. In his reverence for ancient wisdom, Maximus has been preceded by many generations, and he will be followed by many generations after him, the first of which consisted of his own listeners. The *dialexeis* are thus a fragment of an on-going process of repetition of age-old authorities, the knowledge of which separates the educated from the non-educated. Furthermore, when we focus not so much on the big picture as on the individual chain, we can give ourselves an account of the fact that this economy of knowledge appears to honour, at least in the context of the Roman Empire, but also in many other cultures, the individual links of the chain of knowledge with prestige and respect.[263]

From a social perspective, the repetition of ancient cultural references in the interest of a contemporary audience is thus far from irrelevant. As a marker of social distinction, the performance of knowledge simultaneously affirms the authority of the ancient classics and the authority of the contemporaries who *know* these classics. Therefore, in the elitist upper classes of the Roman Empire, which demanded firm criteria to justify their dominance over other classes, straightforward innovation was not welcomed as much as traditional, pseudo-objective values. From this angle, repetition *becomes* meaning, or rather, *is* meaning. By *becoming* meaningful in the eyes of his present attendants and his future imitators, Maximus' performed oeuvre *is* already meaningful for its

263 Cf. the discussion of declamations in Kaster (2001), 325–326: "(…) declamation tended tacitly to instill the belief that convention and tradition were sufficient to meet even the most unexpected needs; and this belief in turn fostered the self-confidence—not to say, complacence—and sustained the social reproduction of the conservative elite who patronized the schools of rhetoric: declamation told this elite, in effect, what it wanted to hear."

author's own foundation of authority. Throughout this authoritative chain of reproduced meaning, this type of rhetoric apparently manages to keep itself alive, even until this very day.

Hence we arrive at a conclusion quite similar to Thomas Schmitz' assessment of the Second Sophistic on the basis of Bourdieuian concepts, yet with a different position for Maximus' personality in it. Rather than picturing him on the receiving end of the traditional discourses where his personality is regarded as fully submitted to the commonplaces with which he serves himself in his orations, it has been shown how he is strategically involved in a chain of knowledge transmission very characteristic of his cultural environment, in which authority is negotiated through an abundant display of knowledge and a cunning appropriation of traditional material in function of the proper self-presentation. Tracing back this programmatic appropriation to Maximus' own precarious position as a philosophical orator, we can detect how Maximus' paradigm offers yet another personal resolution for the continuous tension between the fields of philosophy, rhetoric, and sophistry in Imperial culture.

7 Analysis of Individual *dialexeis*

This final subchapter about Maximus presents a couple of more detailed linear readings of a selection of Maximus' *dialexeis*. They are designed so as to make some more thorough observations about the lines of argumentation and the overall structure of the *dialexeis*, and thus offer more substantial ground for some of the assertions about Maximus than the analyses of isolated passages presented above.

7.1 *Poetic Interpretation and Rhetorical Display: Oration 22*

Maximus' twenty-second oration is most certainly not his most straightforward one, but it contains a dense set of discursive characteristics and techniques that have been analysed throughout this book. As in the first and the twenty-fifth orations, the subject matter pertains to an aspect of *logoi*, and I believe that this can partially serve as an explanation why Maximus' statements can easily be understood to have a self-advertising flavour.

The manuscript title of this oration is *Whether of all the joy brought about by words the one brought about by philosophical words is better?* (Ὅτι πάσης τῆς διὰ λόγων εὐφροσύνης ἡ διὰ φιλοσόφων λόγων ἀμείνων;). What the manuscript title manages to capture is the fact that Maximus treats various sorts of auditory entertainment and recognizes that they all contain some level of joy, but that he

gradually moves up towards the highest form of entertainment, viz. philosophical words. Notice, moreover, that the manuscript title uses the word εὐφροσύνη for joy, an allusion to Maximus' introduction of the problem through a Homeric passage.[264]

Indeed, as happens so often in Maximus, Homer offers the initial ground for the discussion to follow (1–2). In this case, we find a very common problem for every philosophical school that tends to honour Homer's authority as a source of wisdom, except for the Epicureans. Like some of his fellow interpreters of this Homeric passage, Maximus is here confronted with some paradoxical lines in Homer's *Odyssey* that seem to depict Odysseus as a fancier of idle pleasures such as food and drinks. The setting of the story is the land of the Phaeacians, where Odysseus was discovered by Nausikaä, who brought him to her father Alcinoüs. It is here that Odysseus tells his host how agreeable it is to listen to a bard and enjoy the hospitality of a people as well as the pleasures of a rich table and a full wine-cup. Maximus' first response is an apostrophe to Odysseus full of confusion and amazement:

> Ἔρωτῶ δὴ τὸν Ὀδυσσέα· τί ἡγεῖ εἶναι τὴν εὐφροσύνην, ὦ σοφώτατε ἀνδρῶν; (…) Δεινός τις εἶ, ὦ σοφώτατε Ὀδυσσεῦ, ἐπαινέτης εὐφροσύνης δημωδεστάτης, οἵαν ἂν καὶ βάρβαρος ἀνὴρ ἐπαινέσαι, καὶ ἄρτι ἐκ Βαβυλῶνος ἥκων, συνήθης πολυτελεῖ τραπέζῃ, καὶ οἴνῳ χεομένῳ πολλῷ, καὶ ᾠδῇ αὐτοσχεδίῳ· καὶ ταῦτα, ὡς φῄς, ὑπεριδὼν παρ' ἄλλοις τοῦ μελιηδέος λωτοῦ καὶ τῆς Σειρήνων ᾠδῆς.
>
> My question for Odysseus is this: 'Most wise of men, what is your conception of good cheer?' (…) This is dismaying praise, most wise Odysseus, for a most vulgar form of pleasure, such as might win the approval of a foreigner recently arrived from Babylon and accustomed to a costly board and wine flowing in abundance and improvised song—dismaying particularly because you claim elsewhere to have scorned the honey-sweet Lotus and the song of the Sirens.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 22.1–2

It is not hard to figure out where this amazement comes from. Maximus finds himself in an uncomfortable position, as one of his main tenets—the preferability of virtue over pleasure—seems to be contradicted by one of the most authoritative figures of the Greek tradition, Odysseus (and through Odysseus,

264 Cf. Hom. *Il.* 9.2–11.

of course, Homer). Despite his wisdom,[265] Odysseus gives a speech that Maximus would expect from a barbarian who has no idea of true joy, rather than from a character and a composer who are believed to possess true philosophical wisdom. Moreover, if Odysseus' words are to be taken at face value, he seems to fall into self-contradiction, since he elsewhere appeared to refute pleasure as a guiding principle by withstanding the temptation of lotus and the Sirens, Homeric themes that easily lend themselves allegorically to a rejection of pleasure. Of course, this self-contradictory position is very undesirable to be in for any man, and especially for a philosopher. Therefore, Maximus' conviction that Homer cannot consciously convey such a despicable message triggers an interpretation that neutralizes the literal meaning of the passage in favour of an explanation that both restores confidence in Homer's authoritative voice and communicates the right moral values to the audience.

This urge to explain away the incompatibility of this passage with the overall (philosophical) exemplariness which many philosophical schools ascribe to Homer has also invited other ancient interpreters to deal with this passage. Athenaeus[266] describes an interpretation of the Alexandrine critic Eratosthenes, who emends the verse "ἢ ὅτ' εὐφροσύνη μὲν ἔχῃ κάτα δῆμον ἅπαντα"[267] to "ἢ ὅταν εὐφροσύνη μὲν ἔχῃ κακότητος ἀπούσης", and interprets εὐφροσύνη in opposition with κακότητος, (ab)using also the double meaning of εὐφροσύνη as both 'joy' and 'right thinking'. Through these textual and interpretative interventions, Eratosthenes manages to interpret the verses along an intellectual line that opposes itself against a mere hedonistic reading of the passage. He thus restores the exemplarity of the Phaeacians, who were narrated by Homer—through Nausicaä's mouth—to be loved by the gods. The first-century (CE) Stoic interpreter Heraclitus, for his part, argues that Epicurus has falsely interpreted these verses as a sincere praise from Odysseus.[268] Heraclitus argues, on the basis of the internal logic of the narrative, that Odysseus was compelled to praise his host Alcinoüs with the feast he has thrown, as he had just barely survived a storm and was forced by necessity to honour the base pleasures he encountered in Alcinoüs' palace.

265 It is hard to verify how sincere Maximus' praise for Odysseus is here, or whether it should be comprehended as ironic. It appears that the urge to defend Homer also compels him to assume the exemplarity of Odysseus' wisdom. Notice, however, that somewhat further in the same oration (§ 5), Maximus claims that a man who avoids danger is far wiser than Odysseus, thus putting the sincerity of his earlier praise under pressure.

266 Ath. 1.16d.

267 Hom. *Il.* 9.6.

268 Heracl. 79.2–10.

After having taken notice of the efforts by other interpreters of these verses, it is time to turn to Maximus' own disappointingly poor solution to this problem.

> Μήποτε οὖν ἔοικέν τι Ὅμηρος αἰνίττεσθαι ἄλλο κρεῖττον ἢ ὁποῖον τὰ ἔπη λέγοι οὑτωσὶ ἀκούσαντι εὐθύς. †Το γάρ τοι κειμένων σιτίων ἀμφιλαφῶν καὶ οἴνου πολλοῦ—ταῦτα μὲν ἐπιθεῖναι ταῖς τραπέζαις, καὶ τὸν οἶνον τῷ κρατῆρι ἐγχέαι, ἐπαινέσαι δὲ τοὺς δαιτυμόνας ἐν τοσαύταις ἡδοναῖς ἀκροωμένους τοῦ ἀοιδοῦ σπουδῇ, εὐσχήμονά τινα ἔοικεν εὐωχίαν διηγεῖσθαι ἡμῖν, οἵαν μιμήσαιτο ἄν τις νοῦν ἔχων, μεταθεὶς τὰς ἡδονὰς ἀπὸ τῶν αἰσχίστων ἐπὶ τὰ κοσμιώτατα, ἀπὸ τῆς γαστρὸς ἐπὶ τὰς ἀκοάς. Ἢ οὐδὲ τοῦτο ἀπόχρη, εὐωχεῖν τὰς ἀκοὰς εἰκῇ καὶ ἀνέδην,
>
> αὐλῶν συρίγγων τ' ἐνοπῇ[269]
>
> καὶ ἀνθρώπων ὁμάδῳ, ἀλλὰ κἀνταῦθα τέχνης δεῖ κατακοσμούσης τὴν ἀκοῆς εὐωχίαν ἁρμονίᾳ δεξιᾷ.
>
> Perhaps therefore we may suppose Homer to be hinting at some proposition more respectable than the one his lines seem to advance at first hearing. The fact that when there are lavish supplies of food and wine to be had, he sets the one on the table and pours the other into its mixing-bowl, but his *praise* for the diners who listen attentively to the bard even in the midst of such pleasures, seems to betray a desire to show us a seemly kind of merry-making, the kind a man of good senses might imitate, by transferring his enjoyment from the basest of the senses to the most restrained, from belly to ear. But is even this insufficient, if it leaves the ears indulging themselves aimlessly and unrestrainedly in
>
> The strains of the flute and the pipe and the din of human voices?
>
> Do we need some further art to bring order to the ears' enjoyment with its elegant harmonies?
>
> MAX. *Or.* 22.2

269 Hom. *Il.* 10.13.

Homer's exemplary status in Maximus' narrative clearly forces the latter to explain away some inconsistencies in the former's verses, but, all in all, when compared to the attempts of other interpreters, this seems to be a fairly sloppy reconstruction of Homer's original message behind the actual verses. Quite tellingly maybe, despite the abundance of Homeric citations in Maximus, the Tyrian does not provide his audience with the actual verses of Odysseus' praise, but merely paraphrases them, which could have helped disguise the fact that his interpretation of these verses finds itself on slippery territory. In any case, Maximus presents his audience with a self-assured interpretation that, he ascertains, can be traced back to Homer's original intention (cf. εὐσχήμονά τινα ἔοικεν εὐωχίαν διηγεῖσθαι ἡμῖν) and that does *not*, as in Eratosthenes and Heraclitus, lead the reasoning away from the topic of entertainment, but proves the very urgency to treat this aspect of verbal etiquette.

In conclusion, from a strictly logical angle, this passage is not the strongest of Maximus' interpretative undertakings. However, since Maximus finds himself caught between the exemplary philosophical status he himself has bestowed on Homer and the actual content of the Homeric verses that may undermine Homer's image as a source for philosophical wisdom, he could not refrain from intervening as a self-conscious interpreter. If Maximus himself wants to maintain a correspondence between his laudatory statements concerning Homer and his actual use of Homeric verses, his interpretative interventions are there to flatten out inconsistencies in Homer's work and reinstall the ancient poet's authority as a prime philosopher. Moreover, if Maximus made it clear to his audience that he is in fact responsible for the reconstruction of the meaning of Homer's work, this would discredit Homer's image as the source of wisdom in Maximus' *dialexeis*, which would ultimately put Maximus' safe position as a 'translator' of philosophical ideas at risk. In other words, despite the weak argumentative power of Maximus' allegorical interpretation of this Homeric passage, it is primarily designed so as to rescue Homer's exemplarity *as well as* Maximus' authority, and to guarantee a fluent transition from this Homeric example to the remainder of the discussion.

In the process, through the introduction of Odysseus' remarks, which happen to be held at a party, the question of the suitability of *logoi* is smoothly narrowed down to the question of which type of discourse is the most appropriate entertainment at a party. In as much as Maximus will take up the defense of philosophy, he must do so in a setting that might seemingly be perceived as a threat to a philosopher's seriousness. However, in his attempt to extend philosophy's authority to entertaining situations as well, Maximus finds himself in good company, as the symposium was from ancient times onwards

regarded as a suitable occasion for the communication of wise instructions, and Plato's and Xenophon's *Symposium* installed a classical philosophical example for subsequent generations to follow.[270] One of the most obvious heirs of this tradition in Imperial times is Plutarch of Chaeronea, who wrote no less than seven books of *Table talk*, in which he demonstrates the philosophical dimension of his own conversations over wine and food in an exemplary manner. The first programmatic question that Plutarch treats in his *Table talk* closely resembles the discussion that Maximus will take up here, in that the conversationalists at Plutarch's symposium similarly denounce mere rhetorical display but defend the suitability of philosophy at drinking-parties.[271] The question remains whether Maximus was actually willing to defend the practice of philosophizing over wine,[272] but at this stage, it is above all important to realize that his attempt at proving the suitability of philosophical discourse for this sort of event is no audacious appropriation from his part, but is safely anchored in the Greek philosophical tradition.

Maximus begins his discussion of the problem by admitting that he too finds pleasure in melodic music performed on the flute or on the lyre (3). He immediately states, however, that music in itself cannot deliver the most accomplished joy, for it is to words what the mere aroma is to the actual food. He then goes on to qualify which words would suit his goal, rejecting the type of words that merely mimic the orations at court:

> Ἐπεὶ τοίνυν λόγῳ καὶ οὐκ ἄλλῳ τῳ χαίρειν εἰκὸς δαιτυμόνας δεξιούς, τίνας καὶ λόγους αὐτοῖς παραθήσομεν φέροντες; Ἆρα οἳ μὲν *μιμοῦνται* τὰς ἐν δικαστηρίοις ἔριδας, καὶ φιλονικίας καὶ ἐπιτεχνήσεις, καὶ μάχας, κρατύνοντες μὲν τὰ ἄδικα, ἐπικοσμοῦντες δὲ τὰ αἰσχρά, κιβδηλεύοντες τἀληθῆ, ὑγιὲς δὲ οὐδὲν, οὐδὲ ἄδολον, οὐδὲ ἐν τῷ τῆς φύσεως ἐπιχωρίῳ μένειν ἐῶντες, ἀλλ' αὐτὸ ἐκεῖνο, οἷόν περ οἱ τῶν ἀνδραπόδων κάπηλοι, οἳ σώματα παραλαβόντες ἁπλᾶ, ὑφ' ἡλίῳ καθαρῷ καὶ ἀέρι ἐλευθέρῳ τεθραμμένα, σκιατροφοῦντες ταῦτα καὶ λεαίνοντες

270 See Martin (1931) for an historical overview of the genre of symposiac literature.

271 See Plut. *Q.C.* 612e–615c.

272 Notice that while Plutarch aims to elevate the symposium to the traditional heights of Plato's symposium and accepts drinking to be a part of that, Maximus is less programmatic about the exemplarity of the symposium and seems to condemn drinking at a dinner-party. See Lauwers (2009a). In the light of Plato's assertion, in the second book of the *Laws* (666a), that youngsters should refrain from drinking or at best, if they start to mature, enjoy alcohol with moderation, Maximus' stance towards drinking might be yet another (albeit speculative) indication that his audience mainly consisted of young people.

> λυμαίνονται αὐτῶν τὴν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς δημιουργίαν, ἣν ἡ φύσις αὐτοῖς περιέβαλεν κρείττονα τέχνης; Τοιοῦτον γάρ τι ἀμέλει καὶ οἱ περὶ τὰς δίκας εἱλούμενοι δρῶσιν.
>
> Since it is proper for sophisticated diners to revel in words in preference to anything else, what kind of words should these be that we take and supply them with? Should they be words which reproduce the strife and contentiousness and artifices and battles of the lawcourts, strengthening unjust cases, putting fair faces on foul deeds, perverting the truth, allowing nothing to be sound or sincere or to remain in its natural place—for all the world like slave-merchants, who take on simple uncorrupted bodies that have been raised in free air under the pure sun, then rear them in the shadows and smooth them down, thus ruining the original handiwork of Nature, who clothed them in physiques superior to anything that artifice can produce? This is precisely the kind of result achieved by people who spend their lives on court-cases.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 22.3

An important element in this passage is Maximus' philosophical polemic against contemporary rhetorical and sophistic practices, which must have been at the background of this discussion. As we have seen in the analysis of Maximus' forensic tropes, he presents the field of legal declamation as not being concerned with the truth and merely cultivating contentiousness rather than solving it. Pivotal in this passage is also the occurrence of the word μιμοῦνται, which seems to point to the sophists, who take the rhetorical exercise of defending or castigating an historical or imaginary legal case and turn it into mere performative entertainment. In the light of the typical rhetorical exercises that were very fashionable in the Roman Empire, the *suasoriae* and the *controversiae*, it becomes immediately apparent that Maximus' condemnation is thus also directed towards those ostentatious performers who performed fictional or historical cases in order to cheer up a party.

The aspect of *mimesis* is further developed in Maximus' rejection of the Aenianes' dances (4), which only mimic real actions and emotions and are apparently condemned for that. In this respect, Maximus proves himself a devoted follower of Plato's condemnation of *mimesis*, against Aristoteles' description of (and appreciation for) the mimetic aspect of various arts.[273] After that, Max-

273 See Arist. *Poet.* 1447a, where poetry is defined as a form of *mimesis* through words. In the same passage, *mimesis* through dancing is acknowledged as well.

imus expresses his praise for the Persian way of dining, echoing Herodotus and Xenophon in this appreciation.[274] The Persian custom, which restrains the consumption of alcohol, is lauded to such an extent that despite its being sympotic, it is still far better than the 'drunken' mass of Athenian democracy.

In the subsequent paragraph (5), Maximus praises the merits of historical discourse, which is, by the way, also lauded by Sosius Senecio in the aforementioned *Table talk*, recorded by Plutarch.[275] As if he feels the need to illustrate the concrete value of historical knowledge, Maximus seizes the occasion to demonstrate his own wide grip on historical matters, presenting numerous amplifications of historical references. Nevertheless, at the beginning of the next paragraph (6), Maximus feels the need to assert that history, though valuable, is not the perfect form of entertainment, for it lacks the practical applicability and usefulness for the hearer. After all, historical events present a mixture of good and bad events, and have no strict moral framework. Towards the end of this paragraph, it becomes clear that Maximus sees the sort of discourse that deals with issues of the hearers' souls as the most desirable—and what else could that be than philosophy, associated here with prime representatives such as Socrates, Plato, Xenophon, and Aeschines?

In the final paragraph, then, Maximus self-consciously suggests that the ideal discourse ought not to speak as much about one single historical event as about the general condition of the human soul and its struggle for sanity. Throughout these assertions, the strong impression arises that Maximus' own discourse, fully representative of the field of philosophy and suitable to deal with performative situations in an uplifting and responsible manner, may serve as the ultimate answer to the question at hand. Even though he yet again refrains from claiming the title of philosopher for himself, who in the audience could have failed to apply his prescriptions to his own eloquent yet morally relevant discourse?

The last few lines of the speech are reserved for the gods. It appears that Maximus' main point is made *before* the actual end of the speech, but, quite typically for the Tyrian, he presents his audience with a conclusion that enables him to end on a sublime note. In line with his self-presentation as a connoisseur of the gods, he finally preaches a submission to their divine power. A reference to the plague inspires the Tyrian to return to Homer once more, as if in order to close the discussion in the same manner as it started. It is worth noting that

274 See Hdt. 1.133.3, and Xen. *Cyr*. 2.2.1–2.3.1 and 8.8.10.

275 Plut. *Q.C.* 614ab.

this ending is not incompatible with Maximus' earlier message, since Homer is of course also seen as a prime philosopher. In other words, in throwing together Homeric and divine references, Maximus manages to turn these final lines into the *grand finale* for which an orator of his calibre must have been looking.

In conclusion, it is fair to say that this oration once again bears witness to an important self-referential level in the text that manifests itself in Maximus' interpretation of poetic references, in his confident and eloquent composition, and in the strong suggestion that his own *logoi* are the ultimate answer to the initial question. Identifying such elements of self-authorization do not suddenly turn this text into a philosophical masterpiece, but it certainly helps us appreciate the Tyrian's rhetorical efforts in their own right.

7.2 *Structure and Personality: Oration 34*

Maximus' thirty-forth oration deals with the topic of whether and how people can benefit from adverse circumstances. As Michael Trapp has argued,[276] this oration neatly elaborates on the preceding ones, where the goal of philosophy was defined as the virtuous life. This oration, while not being as closely connected to the argument of orations 29 to 33, as these orations are interrelated to each other, still complements it by showing that for a virtuous man even adverse circumstance is not to be considered evil, but rather a challenge to rise to the occasion.

Since the assumption that adverse circumstance is actually purposeful in the world of the wise man presupposes a belief in a cosmic world in which everything has its own proper place and function, the subject matter of this oration touches upon the notion of divine providence (*pronoia*). This notion is generally associated with Stoic ethics and physics, but it can also be found in a number of Middle-Platonic treatises that ascribe the concept of divine providence to Plato himself.[277] In other words, Maximus does not divert from Platonic theory in discussing these issues, even though his imagery and reasoning betray a close alliance to Stoic beliefs. Quite typically of Maximus' overall treatment of philosophy as a non-specialized and common-sense discipline, however, the actual term '*pronoia*' does not occur in this oration.

What will be demonstrated in the analysis of this oration, which is to be taken as quite representative of many other *dialexeis*, is that Maximus' argumentation technique is not as random and associative as previous research has

276 See Trapp (1997a), 267.

277 See Ps.Plut. *Plac.* 884f, Apul. *Plat.* 1.12, and Alcin. *Didas.* 7.161.5–6 and 12.167.12–15.

tended to portray it. Through a paraphrase and a reconstruction of the line of thought of this oration, we will discover a purposeful text of a self-conscious orator, rather than the mere musings of a weak personality.

The title of the oration in the manuscript tradition is *That it is possible to benefit even from adverse circumstances*. This captures the general sense of the oration quite well, even though there still remain some additional remarks to be made. The first one, voiced by Michael Trapp, is that this title obscures the close connection between this oration and the preceding ones (cf. *supra*). A second one, in my opinion, is that it obscures the conceptual framework that holds this oration together, which is precisely the background of divine providence discussed above. The central question of this oration is how one can reconcile the existence of divine providence with the fact that the good man also encounters adverse circumstances in his life. As an important side-track of this general argument, there is the assertion that only the virtuous man can enjoy the good life, while the wicked man is bound to neglect the benefits of divine providence and experiences nothing but evil. In other words, while the former central question of this oration pertains to the domain of physics as well as ethics, the latter corresponds well with Maximus' overall ethical project to inspire his audience to become good men, an objective which he obviously shares with many other philosophers.

Maximus starts out his oration with a reference to the gods and their strict division between good and evil, while man is credited with the tragic conflation of the two (1). The beginning of this oration contains some corrupt passages, which makes it hard to reconstruct the reasoning entirely, but we can in any case see that Maximus uses the imagery of eternal sunlight, declaring that if there were always sunlight, no one in his right mind would turn to darkness anymore. The consequence of the comparison is quite clear: the wickedness of some men as regards the problem of good and evil is merely a problem of insight and knowledge.

In a Socratic fashion, Maximus asserts that the soul self-evidently aspires to the good, and that only wrong beliefs can be responsible for experiencing evil (2). Maximus then states that he will not deal with the wicked soul, which has no capacity for experiencing the good (even though this theme will recur several times throughout his oration, albeit merely as a negative example to make the proper behaviour stand out). Subsequently, the topic of the wise man's experience of adverse circumstance is introduced. The good man is likened to a runner who does not give up, but faces the obstacles that are placed in front of him, while a wicked man easily gets demoralized. From a stylistic point of view, the comparison is very polished, as it contains two tricola for each element of the comparison, that is, four tricola in total. It appears that

this comparison is not only introduced as a form of clarification, but also for its own rhetorical merits.

After this introduction, Maximus takes up the initial topic of divine providence again by discussing a Homeric verse about Zeus' two jars[278] (3). The passage has been criticized in Plato's *Republic*[279] because Plato argues that the gods are only responsible for the good. Maximus finds an interesting way to save both Homer and Plato, by postulating that the Homeric allegory does not pertain to divine dispensation itself, but only to the consequences of divine providence for human beings. By transferring the evil to the domain of human psychology, Maximus seems to give an intellectualizing interpretation that neutralizes Plato's critique. If a human being perceives that he is being treated badly by divine dispensation, it is because of his own lack of understanding; hence the Homeric image of there being two jars, according to Maximus.

As a further explanation, Maximus now likens this Homeric image to two streams, one of virtue, the other of wickedness (4). The latter confuses and destroys human life, the former feeds it and makes it blossom. However, this does not mean that the virtuous man, likened to a farmer, can simply rest assured. He still has to put in a lot of effort to enjoy his crops, even if he were an Egyptian living alongside the Nile, a notoriously fecund stream.

Maximus has at this point finally finished the introduction of the conceptual framework according to which his discussion ought to be comprehended. He has also sufficiently treated the division between the wise and the wicked man, and he now proceeds to the answers about the meaning of adverse circumstance in the life of a good man. Notice, however, how this shift happens in a very unbound way, in the middle of some illustrations and historical references. This is by no means a technical treatise, but this does not mean that there is no method behind the seemingly 'mad' amplifications of references that are so typical of Maximus' work.

From the land, we transfer our gaze towards the harbour, where Maximus argues for the need for an *experienced* helmsman. The same argument is made in favour of an experienced general on the battlefield. Maximus thus quite casually introduces his first major argument in favour of divine providence behind adverse circumstance: adverse circumstance gives a wise man experience. The idea that bad fortune should be seen as a sort of training is not thoroughly innovative, given that it has parallels in the work of Imperial Stoic authors such as

278 Hom. *Il.* 24.527.

279 Pl. *Resp.* 379cd. See Trapp (1997a), 270 n. 7.

Seneca and Epictetus,[280] but it remains remarkable how Maximus manages to relate the argument quite smoothly to the basic experiences of his audience, relying on accessible examples from everyday life. From there, he again dives into his box full of ancient references, and digs out the examples of the general Nicias and the demagogue Cleon.

Then the renowned cases of Croesus and Polycrates are put forward (5), which again dwell on the theme that only wise men can hope for prosperity, but simultaneously find themselves on the cutting line between Maximus' first and his second answer to the question about the purpose of adverse circumstance. A Homeric line about tasting without actually indulging and an imagery of eyes and colours fulfil a similar transitional function, in that they can be understood to follow from the first argument but already introduce a second one, viz. the fact that adverse circumstance enables one to enjoy pleasure more (6). This argument is obviously less in line with Stoic doctrine, which considers pleasure an unreliable guide and would at best concede that the absence of thirst is preferred over thirst. By turning to the images of hunger and thirst, Maximus rather seems to rely on popular psychology to push his point home, showing, through the introduction of the negative example of Artoxerxes, that such a position does not make him vulnerable to Epicurean beliefs.

A final reason is smoothly introduced in the beginning of the seventh paragraph, where Maximus, still referring to Artoxerxes' excessive hedonism, asks himself whether, if one can become saturated with pleasure, the same applies to good fortune (7). This leads to a final reason to assume the purposeful nature of adverse circumstance, viz. that it enables a good man to prove his moral strength and receive honour for it. Apart from making a decent philosophical point, Maximus here also shows his audience how this philosophical reasoning can contribute to their social prestige. As illustrations of this point, Maximus offers an extensive discussion of Homeric heroes such as Achilles, Nestor, and Odysseus, and a reference to Hercules (8). The latter, especially, appears to have been a topical reference, as Epictetus also uses the imagery of Hercules' works and his subsequent honour to demonstrate the inherent merits of adverse circumstance and the good man's determination to face it.[281]

Also topical is Maximus' discussion of the imagery of life as a continuous contest such as the Olympian and Pythian Games.[282] Philosophers are thus portrayed as agonists (9), and authoritative heavyweights such as Socrates,

280 See Sen. *Prov.* 2.2–3; Epict. 3.12.

281 Epict. 1.6.32–36.

282 Epict. 1.24.1–2.

Plato, Xenophon, and Diogenes are thrown into the arena. After a last Homeric reference,[283] the scope is widened once again to the honour of those Athenians who fell at Marathon, and the immortal honour they bestowed on their people. A final place is reserved for the Spartans, who were, of course, a notorious example of hardship, enduring pain and beatings even in times of peace. In this last example, Maximus refers to a theme that is typical of Stoic and especially of Epictetus' thinking, viz. freedom. Moreover, the example of Sparta follows the illustrative chain of adverse circumstance as a way to enhance one's reputation, for the Spartans of course enjoyed a wide reputation for being the toughest people, but it also yet again takes up the notion of adverse circumstance as a form of training. It thus forms an emblematic conclusion to Maximus' treatment of this philosophical issue.

The preceding paragraphs offer a fairly extensive paraphrase of Maximus' thirty-forth oration, not just to show how the Tyrian answers the problem under consideration, but also to illustrate his general mode of argumentation and his compositional techniques. In order to clarify my analysis, I present it here in a more concise manner.

[MAIN QUESTION: HOW TO RECONCILE DIVINE PROVIDENCE WITH THE FACT THAT THE GOOD MAN EXPERIENCES ADVERSE CIRCUMSTANCES?][284]

[P: premise; I: image or illustration; A: answer]

[FRAMING PREMISES]

§ 1 P1. DIVINE PROVIDENCE SEPARATES GOOD AND EVIL

P2. EXPERIENCING ONLY EVIL IS A CONSEQUENCE OF HUMAN WICKEDNESS, WHICH IS CAUSED BY A LACK OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT THE GOOD

I1. Eternal sun (P2)

§ 2 P3. THE GOOD MAN EXPERIENCES DIFFICULTIES AS WELL

I2. Runners (P2 + P3)

§ 3 I3. Zeus' jar (P1 + P2 + P3)

283 Hom. *Od.* 4.244–245.

284 This main argument is reconstructed on the basis of P1 and P3 and the other sources where a similar sort of argumentation occurs, and holds the entire oration together quite neatly. In § 2, Maximus points out that what primarily interests him is the good man, thereby pushing P2 somewhat to the background. However, throughout the oration, for example in the negative example of Artoxerxes, P2 makes an occasional recurrence, if only to mark the distinctive qualities of the good man.

§4 *Explanation*: One of Zeus' jars for virtuous people, one for wicked people (I3)

- I4a. Good and evil as streams (P2)
- I4b. Good man as farmer (P3)
  - I5. Egyptians (I4b)

[ANSWERS]

A1. ADVERSE CIRCUMSTANCE GIVES EXPERIENCE

- I6. Helmsman and general (A1)
  - I7. Nicias, Cleon (I6)

§5 *Gradual transition to A2, while still in line with A1*

- I8. Croesus and Solon, Amasis and Polycrates (extension of I6 + A2 + P2)
  - I9. Homeric verse (I8 + A2)
    - I10. Image of colours (I9 + A2)

§6 A2. ADVERSE CIRCUMSTANCE ENABLES ONE TO ENJOY A SIMPLE PLEASURE MORE

- I11. Hunger and thirst (A2)
  - I12. Artoxerxes (I11 + P2)

§7 *Conceptual transition from* excess *of pleasure to* excess *of good fortune*

A3. ADVERSE CIRCUMSTANCE ENABLES A GOOD MAN TO PROVE HIS HIGH MORAL STANDARDS AND ENJOY A MAXIMUM OF FAME

§8
- I13. Achilles, Nestor, Odysseus, Hercules (A3)
- I14. Life is like a contest, virtuous men are good contestants (A3)
  - I15. Socrates, Plato, Diogenes (I14)
  - I16. Homeric verse (I14)
- I17. The Athenians in Marathon (A3)
- I18. The Spartans (A1 + A3)

On the basis of this schematic overview, some observations can be made. The first one is that the number of illustrations and references is far greater than the number of premises and arguments. Indeed, this is not a very dense philosophical discussion that restricts itself to a minimal use of illustrations; it rather seems that Maximus is inclined to seize each and every opportunity to clarify the argument to his audience while simultaneously demonstrating the wide applicability of what he defines as philosophy and his own firm grip on the field of *paideia*.

However, if this were the only conclusion we could extract from this schema, it would be pointless to present one. There is another, more profound observation to be made, viz. that after the narrative has been deconstructed and schematized, we are presented with a fairly clear structure in which the first

paragraphs serve as a conceptual introduction and the last ones as Maximus' answer to the question. A similarly clear structure can be disclosed in many of the Tyrian's seemingly offhand treatments of philosophical problems, provided that one can identify the underlying philosophical premises that inform Maximus' discussion.

What does this tell us, then, about Maximus' compositional techniques? The discovery of an underlying structure does not give us a definitive answer to the question whether these orations were improvised or not, but they at least suggest that Maximus did put in some preparatory work, if only to make sure that his argument does not entirely abandon its original orientation. Whether this preparatory work included a written version of this speech or only the activation of some mental schemes is food for mere speculation.

What we can be more assured of, however, is that there is a more programmatic underpinning of the argument than Maximus is generally given credit for. As a matter of fact, Koniaris' suggestion that Maximus is preaching as if in trance[285] does not adequately describe what is going on here. Maximus' discourse may make an associative and casual impression, but the author also gives the impression of constantly keeping an eye on the eventual message (and thus avoids his audience's suspicion that he does not treat the proposed philosophical problem).[286] *En cours de route*, however, he seizes every opportunity to embellish his fairly rudimentary message with his knowledge of Greek culture and philosophical commonplaces. Koniaris' fairly negative appreciation of Maximus' practice as the production of an uncontrolled stream of words can partly be explained by his failure to assess the importance of Maximus' references for the authorization of his ethos. Reassessing the casual yet delib-

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285 Koniaris (1982), 120. The negative undertone of this assessment is repeated in Sandy (1997), 94 sqq., esp. 108. Both authors seem to underestimate the importance of the communication of commonplaces within the contemporary cultural environment. See however Sandy (1997), 110: "The topic of the moment, the *locus communis* that is elaborated, the phrase that is balanced—these become the ends rather than the means to an end." See also Anderson (2007), 349, where Maximus' discussion of Socrates is used to illustrate this tendency of making rhetoric an end in itself.

286 See also the refutations in Trapp (1997b), 1956–1958, with examples of *Or*. 5, 11, 12, and 25. Trapp also correctly evaluates that the underlying logic of some orations may in fact be above the heads of his public of beginners. While this assessment may be correct, we may ask ourselves whether a beginner in the public would be annoyed by this, given that he also has the learned references to Greek cultural history as a reassuring guide through Maximus' reasonings. Yet the philosophical underpinnings do give Maximus some credibility as a connoisseur of more complicated and elaborate philosophical issues.

erate structure of Maximus' speeches and defining a purpose for what Koniaris believes to be an uncontrolled stream of references will definitely assist us in regarding Maximus as a self-conscious orator whose abundant amplifications are actually relevant in his authoritative and self-authorizing communication with his audience.

7.3 *Paideia and Philosophical Dilemmas: Orations 39–40*

The question which Maximus proposes to treat in this set of *dissoi logoi* is a complicated one, and has puzzled philosophers from Plato up to Maximus and beyond. Moreover, the answer to this question radically separated the Stoa from the Peripatos. Whereas the Stoics believed that virtue alone is enough for a person's well-being, the Peripatetics asserted that human happiness depends on the right combination of prosperity of the soul, the body and external circumstances. Middle-Platonists were caught between these two positions, and basically had to decide for themselves which line of thought they were to follow.[287]

In other words, Maximus' ambiguous treatment of the degrees of the Good is informed by traditional philosophical debates, and is even grounded in Middle-Platonism's own indecision on this particular matter. However, as we have seen in the previous discussion of oration 34, this philosophical underpinning does not lead to a technical philosophical discussion with references to the original thinkers. Quite significantly, while we clearly encounter two different philosophical personae, neither of them is actually labelled in accordance with his respective philosophical alliance. However, as appears from the end of the fortieth oration, to be discussed below, there is no doubt that Maximus did in fact associate the persona of the thirty-ninth oration with the Stoic movement. It is quite likely that some part of the audience, which was perhaps already more aware of philosophical themes, may have picked up on the philosophical orientation of these Maximean personae, but the display of wide learning and the engaging polemical tone of the orations does not necessitate the possession of this background knowledge in order to make this double performance of opposed philosophical viewpoints an entertaining and instructive talk.

The performance of such opposed philosophical viewpoints does not primarily serve a programmatic Sceptic conception of philosophy—after all, ref-

287 For a somewhat more extensive overview of this problem, with references to primary and secondary literature, see Trapp (1997a), 306–307. While this philosophical background is interesting in its own respect, what interests me more here is how Maximus uses the form of the *dissoi logoi* and what the audience could be expected to receive from it.

erences to any Sceptical concepts such as the ten Tropes, suspension of judgement, and a carefree life nowhere turn up in this discussion. Again, it must be admitted that the Sceptical movement in all likelihood contributed to the legitimation of this type of performance within the field of philosophy, but the ultimate purpose of Maximus' *dissoi logoi* is rather to be sought elsewhere, viz. in the speaker's display of his wide grip of the philosophical answers to this issue and in the communications of philosophical and other commonplaces that empower a careful listener with the material to stand his ground in basic philosophical discussions of this kind.

In the thirty-ninth discourse, Maximus defends the view that the Good is one and indivisible by castigating Homer's comments on the behaviour of Glaucus, who exchanged armour with Diomedes in the sixth book of the *Iliad*. He then moves on with references to Herodotus and the two characters Dardanus and Polyphemus, after which he gives a more or less theoretical assessment of the matter at hand (1). Subsequently, Maximus draws some analogies with physical health, music, a chorus, a trireme, a chariot and an army (2). Life is then likened to a road to the Good, though many fail to reach this goal. It is also compared to an initiation at Eleusis (3). After that, the public is encouraged to leave the earthly 'goods' behind and focus on the one Good instead. Note that the public is only castigated here in conditional clauses, implying that they do not necessarily display a preference for earthly goods. This is quite typical of Maximus' gentle pose *vis-à-vis* his listeners (4). In conclusion, Maximus argues that the gods are basically one Good, and then shows that Socrates is superior to Callias and Alcibiades, because he cherishes the higher Good (5). This philosophical position, not advertised as Stoic but clearly inspired by Stoicism, is thus defended by means of a series of doctrinal viewpoints, instructive analogies and authoritative texts and persons. It appears to be a good introduction, then, to Stoic discourse concerning the Good while providing a less informed public with a couple of entertaining and illuminating proofs of the speaker's general education.

The fortieth oration presents itself as a clear refutation of the thirty-ninth. Maximus refers to the same passage in Homer's *Iliad*, but this time defends Glaucus' perspective against Homer's detractions, simultaneously questioning the status of the persona of the thirty-ninth discourse as a proper judge in this debate. We clearly witness here how Maximus demonstrates the wide applicability of Homeric verses and commonplaces without becoming an innocent or neutral translator of this poetic wisdom, as the opposite interpretation of one and the same Homeric passage in the beginning of oration 39 and 40 forms the very introduction to the deep conceptual opposition between these two philosophical personae. After an authoritative reference to Odysseus, Maximus

picks up the case of beauty (which has been mentioned by the previous persona in his discussion of Callias and Alcibiades) only to show that here too there are several degrees. Paris' judgement is mentioned (1) as well as Homer's description of Artemis and the nymphs (note that this also refutes the previous persona's assertions that the gods are basically one Good). There are also references to Menelaos, Agamemnon, Achilles, Nireus, Thersites, Ajax, Diomedes, Sthenelus and Menestheus, showing the speaker's ample factual knowledge of Homer's work (2). As if this is not enough, other Homeric characters such as Andromache, Penelope and Nestor are used as well in order to strengthen the speaker's argument. Subsequently, Maximus refutes the previous persona's view on health (3), and proposes to conduct the following refutation along three lines of thought, viz. whether it is beneficial to think of the Good as one, whether it is possible (4), and whether it could be true (5). This section is full of analogies suggesting that there are several degrees of Good, such as the idea of moral progress along a couple of stepping-stones (again an appropriation of the previous persona's imagery of life as a road to the Good), the light of a fire, the sun and the moon, the case of a soldier, and that of a ship in need of a helmsman. Similarly, the final paragraph (6) is filled with references to Homer, Atys, the gods, and historical figures, all of whom ought to illustrate that the Good consists of several degrees. At the very end of the fortieth speech, Maximus launches a remarkably personal assault on the persona of the previous speech:[288]

> Καὶ μέχρι μὲν ταύτης ἀνδρίζῃ, καὶ ἀξιόπιστος εἶ λέγων· ἐὰν δέ σου καὶ περὶ πλούτου πυνθάνωμαι, τί φῄς; Ποῖ τὸ πρᾶγμα τάττεις; Ἐν ποίῳ χορῷ; Λέγε γυμνῇ τῇ κεφαλῇ, τὰς τῆς ψυχῆς φωνὰς λέγε· τί φῄς τὸν πλοῦτον; Κακόν; Τί οὖν ἐρᾷς; Ἀγαθόν; Τί οὖν φεύγεις;

288 Trapp (1997a), 321 n. 28 leaves open the possibility that Maximus here addresses not the persona of the previous speech but an uncommitted member of his audience. However, this seems to me the less obvious option. Firstly, it seems quite unlikely that Maximus would suddenly encourage his audience to intervene concerning a technical problem such as the Stoic view on wealth, whereas elsewhere he seems to emphasize their dependence on him. Secondly, as I already demonstrated, Maximus does generally not castigate his audience in such a direct fashion as it appears here. Thirdly, it would be fairly strange that the audience would have listened to a speech which is clearly designed as a refutation and in which Maximus vividly addresses the previous persona as 'you' throughout the entire speech, and then suddenly feel itself addressed in the final paragraph of the oration, especially since the address to the Stoic persona gives no interpretative problems.

> Ἡ γλῶττ' ἐπώμοσ', ἡ δὲ φρὴν ἀνώμοτος.[289]

> Ἀλλ' οὐδέτερον ἡγεῖ, οὐκ ἀγαθόν, οὐ κακόν, ἀλλ' ἐν μεθορίᾳ καὶ χώρᾳ μέσῃ. Τήρησον αὐτὸ ἀδιάφορον, μὴ προέλθῃς περαιτέρω, μὴ ὑπερβῇς τοὺς ὅρους. Ἂν δ' ὑπαλλάξας τὸ ὄνομα ἀγαθὸν μὲν μὴ καλῇς, προηγμένον δὲ καλῇς τὴν μὲν φωνὴν μετέβαλες, τὴν δὲ τιμὴν δίδως.

> Up to this point you keep your nerve, and what you say is plausible. But if I ask you about wealth, what do you say? Where do you rank this attribute? In which category? Speak out bareheaded, speak with the voice of the soul! What have you to say about wealth? Is it an evil? Why then are you in love with it? Is it a good? Why then do you try to avoid it? Is it that

> Your tongue swore, but your heart remains unsworn?

> Or do you think it is neither a good nor an evil, but occupies an intermediate position in no man's land? Keep it as an 'indifferent', advance no further, keep within the limits! If you give it a subtly different name and call it not a good but a 'preferred', then for all the change in name, you are still granting it value.
>
> MAX. *Or.* 40.6

Maximus lays bare a notable problem in Stoic doctrine here, and he appears to do so in order to discredit the previous speaker. Without actually mentioning the philosophical orientation of his adversary, he clearly indicates—at least to those familiar with Stoic doctrine—which school is the butt of his biting ridicule. In doing so, Maximus does not seem to adopt a detached mode of argumentation aimed at demonstrating the essentially problematic nature of the dogmatic philosophies' search for the truth about this matter, but rather the pose of a rhetorician who puts to use every single argument that he could possibly find to win this clash of opinions, including an assault *ad hominem* during which the adversary is accused of hypocrisy. The alleged Stoic self-contradiction is thus not exploited in a strictly logical way, but exhibited as a weak spot in a rhetorical competition between two opposite viewpoints. Almost in passing, the Stoic *persona* is accused of being in love with wealth, a strategy clearly designed so as the damage the latter's ethos even further. Furthermore, the amplificatory use of tendentious questions suggests that the

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289 A famous citation from Euripides' *Hippolytus* (v. 612).

Stoic persona is unable to maintain consistency when wealth is concerned. Finally, the Euripidean verse and the comments on the Stoic terms ἀδιάφορον and προηγμένον are clearly designed so as to mock the Stoic position and convince the audience to side with the persona that is presently speaking. Thus, after having witnessed an introduction to the Stoic view on the Good in the thirty-ninth oration, the audience now gets a clear overview of some possible anticipations from the Peripatetic side. The biting polemical tone, especially of the latter persona, can hardly be thought in accordance with the Sceptical goal of suspension of judgement and the according ideal of *ataraxia*. A more likely effect in the audience is that of an enthusiastic response in which one's soul is moved to clapping, shouting, and screaming in a manner quite similar to the grand sophistic performances of this era.

If programmatic Scepticism is not the most likely background and purpose of this double performance, then what is? Apart from the obvious entertaining effect, the comparison between both speeches shows that a large number of the arguments pro or contra the unity of the Good rely on different interpretations of largely the same texts and phenomena. The latter persona clearly uses the arguments and structure of the former in order to refute the former's viewpoints. This may have presented the audience with a decent overview of the doctrinal stakes, and showed them how to push home one's performed opinion against a philosophical opponent.

In conclusion, although the order of the two speeches may suggest that Maximus is more inclined to support the Peripatetic standpoint,[290] we should not forget that the Stoic persona of the thirty-ninth oration pleads his case in an equally vigorous and uncompromising style. Modern readers of these two *dialexeis* may therefore be at a loss concerning which eventual answer is best according the person behind the personae, and it may be assumed that Maximus' direct audience, which was generally used to receive at least the suggestion of clear answers in the Tyrian's speeches, was equally unable to extract Maximus' true opinion from these opposite discourses. Yet, if we are willing to leave aside our frustration concerning the referential level of meaning and read these texts on the level of authorial self-presentation built on the performance of knowledge of the dilemma, the presentation of the two sides of the debate actually becomes purposeful. If Maximus only chose one side in the debate, he would face a hard time showing that his knowledge

290 On Maximus' general tendency to present his own opinion in the latter oration, see Trapp (1997a), xxxiii. In this case, however, I see no cogent reasons to interpret Maximus' own opinion as Peripatetic.

comprises the entire philosophical tradition concerning this matter. By placing himself on both sides, he can demonstrate his mastery over the entire set of philosophical arguments that are put forward in favour of or against the unity of the Good, and that a good Middle-Platonist should take all into account. From a communicational angle, the rhetorical form of *in utramque partem disserere* enables the speaker to present his audience with the relevant arguments to talk about these matters and subsequently show how some arguments may be refuted by other ones. In this instructive communication, Maximus, no doubt aware of the polemical nature of many philosophical debates, does not restrict himself to logical reasonings, but also presents his opinions in a vehemently combative fashion, demonstrating (especially in the last paragraph) that any argument—even *ad hominem*—can be effective in winning over an audience for one's (philosophical) cause. For an audience that could find itself stuck in situations in which they had to defend a certain philosophical viewpoint—at a symposium, in a marketplace, at a bookstore, during political discussions, *et cetera*—a basic knowledge of both sides of the debate could indeed be very helpful.

Conclusion

From an historical perspective of reception, we probably owe the transmission of Maximus' orations largely to their accessibility, their general clarity and their aptness for a basic instruction in classical Greek culture and philosophy. While gratefully accepting the fact that these characteristics have probably guaranteed its transhistorical preservation, we have now attempted to situate this collection of speeches in its *original* socio-cultural environment, identifying some important similarities with the general tendencies in the fields of rhetoric, sophistry, and philosophy of the High Roman Empire.

The set-up of this book has merely been from the general level (chapter 1) to the specific (chapter 2). By means of conclusion, I would like to address the question what a study of Maximus, after being informed by the socio-cultural background of Imperial intellectual culture, can add in turn to our understanding of the global picture of intellectual culture in the Roman Empire.

Maximus' work presents modern interpreters with the consequences of its being imbedded in a cultural field that tends to frame innovations in terms of traditional examples and paradigms. The *dialexeis* are very typical of Imperial sophistic and philosophical poetics in that they radically seem to value knowledge of the tradition over fresh inventions, or at least they are so represented. In an environment in which 'high' culture did not allow itself to distinguish itself radically from 'lower' branches by searching for ground-breaking innovations and paradigm shifts in the literary field, Maximus' individual appropriation of the highly respected institution of Greek philosophy, which offers only a glimpse of a much broader 'economical' treatment of philosophical display, must have come as a threat to those intellectuals who witnessed the wide expansion of philosophy and philosophical self-display among *parvenu* circles of non-specialized Roman citizens.[1] It is not entirely clear to what extent Max-

1 Most (2011) labels this tendency, the origins of which he situates in the early principate, as pseudo-philosophy, making an impression of being philosophical without actually having the technical underpinning which a modern interpreter would expect. While this pseudo-philosophy is an acceptable tendency for works that merely seem to claim philosophical underpinning for a discipline that is quite remote from it (such as architecture), the question is whether the same can apply when philosophy is the actual topic of the talks, as it is in Maximus. As long as we accept the modern definition of philosophy, there appears to be no problem, but we cannot exclude the hypothesis that this pseudo-philosophy was, in the eyes of a substantial number of people in the Roman Empire, indeed an actual manifestation of philosophy.

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imus' own person testifies to a degeneration of philosophical knowledge and devotion among those who claim to be a philosopher, given the supposition that he could also have been, in the same vein as Lucian's famous *Teacher of rhetoric*, a top-notch philosopher who deliberately cut down on philosophical complexity in the communication of relevant knowledge to his audience. But no matter whether we ascribe Maximus' reductions of the field of philosophy to his own lack of knowledge or to the communicational context of his speeches, his popularizing philosophy represents a type of knowledge transmission that tends to honour, against some other, more demanding paradigms of philosophy, the values of accessibility, feasibility, functionality, and compatibility with the general craze for diverse sorts of *paideia* that appears to have captured the elite communities of the Roman Empire.

If it were not for authors such as Maximus, we could have assumed that Imperial intellectuals such as Dio, Aristides, Favorinus, Marcus Aurelius, and Epictetus, who set themselves apart from the tendency towards functionality and superficiality, merely 'invented' what they often label as their sophistic adversaries, who undermine the self-evident authority of great intellectuals by self-confidently mimicking their gestures, outward appearance, and even their style of discourse. Cases such as Maximus, which hint at a functional use of philosophical knowledge and a *parvenu* social appropriation of philosophical capital, suggest that such intellectual adversaries as figure in the works of Plutarch, Lucian, and many others, are no fictive 'others' merely designed for these authors' philosophical self-display, but real people who constantly threaten to destabilize the natural prevalence of highly devoted *pepaideumenoi* and philosophers. While Apuleius, in his *Apology*, could fortunately position himself self-confidently against his uneducated adversaries and thus probably mitigate the judgement of his fellow *pepaideumenos* Claudius Maximus, how would he have fared if an equally self-confident pupil of Maximus had stood up against him, just as capable of making a quick educated and philosophical impression on the basis of some superficial knowledge of the philosophical tradition? Conversely, if the excellent performer and knowledgeable Academic Favorinus was denied some privileges by the Emperor Hadrian on the basis of the latter's belief that the former was not a real philosopher, could this partly have to do with the fact that his era was scattered with 'Maximi' who were not deterred by the limits of their philosophical knowledge to make an equally eloquent claim to philosophical distinction? The big disadvantage of receiving wide social recognition for one's pursuits is that one might soon discover that one's own exemplarity is challenged by other people claiming to cherish the same pursuits, or, even more interestingly, variants of the same pursuits which are in turn advertised as the real deal.

The great intellectual interest in philosophy during the Imperial era, either as an end in itself or as an addition to one's overall education, has put the older conceptions of philosophy, for as far as they were ever stable, severely under pressure, and has brought about considerable innovations that were cunningly represented as legitimately stemming from the philosophical tradition. Maximus seems to rely on a paradigm that has from a long transhistorical perspective been proven not to be dominant—at least not in academic circles—but the dynamic nature of Imperial philosophy, understood in its vivid interactions with the field of rhetoric and sophistry, may have made this spectacular and wordy philosophy of knowledge, as I have labelled it, a successful alternative to Dio's political, Aristides' rhetorical, Epictetus' therapeutic, Sextus Empiricus' liberating, Favorinus' ostentatious, Marcus Aurelius' consoling, and Galen's medical conception of philosophy.

Just as Maximus forces a modern reader to expand his understanding of Imperial philosophy along the lines of wider social tendencies, so he must have challenged other self-proclaimed philosophers to prove that their ideas concerning philosophy were equally or more able to cope with the versatile aspects of human life. What adds to the persuasiveness of Maximus' discourse is that he does not seem to put his audience before a radical choice between social recognition and individual self-fulfilment. While philosophers *à la* Maximus and their potential followers are in many Imperial sources often associated with strategic malice and the mere negotiation of prestige and power, an actual reading of the *dialexeis* allows us to assume that there is no reason why this type of philosophy could not truly have convinced members in the audience that they were partaking in a type of socially relevant philosophizing which can contribute to both their distinctive position in society and their more interiorized feelings of moral progress and inner happiness. It is especially in order to recognize this latter aspect of *parvenu* knowledge transmission that the possession of a first-hand corpus such as that of Maximus proves to be invaluable.

The analysis of the communication of Maximus' *dialexeis* within his social environment also opens the eyes for alternative explanations of the contemporary societal success of authors who have posthumously enjoyed a perennial reception as exemplary and canonized philosophers. After all, is it not possible that the success of one of the most influential philosophers of his day, Plutarch of Chaeronea, has to be attributed to the fact that his thorough knowledge of (Platonic) philosophy did not prevent him from presenting himself as a knowledgeable and understandable guide to those who were not willing to devote their entire lives to the austere study of philosophical treatises? In other words, is it possible that, rather than offering a potential ground for doubting Plutarch's prototypicality as a philosopher, the variety of the Plutarchan cor-

pus, consisting of some treatises that closely resemble Maximus' topics and argumentation techniques, have in fact *increased* his philosophical aura among his contemporaries, as it aptly responds to a societal need for philosophical instruction on a basic everyday level? It is quite unlikely that Maximus should be considered on the same intellectual level as Plutarch, but the study of the former can in any case help us estimate the conditions under which the latter (and perhaps the former as well) could shine.

Another field that can benefit from a contextualization on the basis of Maximus' work is that of the Christian preachers of the Imperial era. Maximus himself nowhere alludes to this relatively new development in the intellectual circles of his day—this in opposition to, for example, Lucian[2]—but this does not mean that his discourse is not instructive to assess the rhetorical position of these preachers. After all, a discourse such as that of Maximus illustrates the self-evident flair with which the traditional cultural and philosophical heritage of classical Greece keeps on being transmitted and consumed within the context of Roman elite culture. Reading Maximus' easy dismissal of contemporary 'novelties' such as Christianity assist us in estimating the difficult task of Christian preachers such as Tatian or Clemens of Alexandria, who tried to convert roughly the same public of elite intellectuals to the values of their relatively new religion. No wonder that they performed their Christian message with a rhetorical splendour quite similar to that of Maximus, in a vivid dialogue with classical Greek authorities, not only, I believe, to prove the superiority of their faith, but also to present *themselves* as connoisseurs of the field of traditional *paideia*, which is, as we have amply witnessed in Maximus, an important mechanism of self-authorization in the poetics of this era. Without such knowledge display, it is highly unlikely that they would have been successful in persuading people from the higher social echelons to abandon the self-evident chain of knowledge kept alive by Maximus and many of his pagan contemporaries.

All in all, looking at the societal and intellectual consequences of the mere existence of a philosophizing discourse such as that of Maximus, we come to witness one of the underlying reasons for the Imperial fixation on the relationship between words and deeds, on true philosophical devotion, and on a thorough knowledge of and reverence for traditional authorities. His work is thus invaluable for those who want to describe rather than to judge the versatile field of Imperial philosophy. For someone looking for a first taste of the manifold complexities of the philosophical discussions of the Imperial era, I would hardly recommend Maximus as a starting point, but his case notably

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2 See Luc. *Mort.Peregr.* 11–16.

complements the overall picture of Imperial philosophy as it has taken shape, not only in the strict fields of modern philosophical research, but also, and especially over the last few decades, in the overall study of Imperial intellectual culture.

Reading Maximus may not deliver the highest form of pleasure and education to a modern academic searching for intellectual stimulation, but it is far from implausible that a good deal of people could (and maybe even can) derive some instructive enjoyment from a proper performance of the *dialexeis*—what a pity we are deprived of that direct experience! It is the kind of educational pleasure that modern academics are taught to despise, and which may cause them to be ashamed if a colleague walks into their office and sees a book of, to name but one, Alain de Botton lying on their desk. But it is also the kind of instructive entertainment which a proper critic should recognize, even if only in others, in order to see how it presents a continuous challenge to those who claim to embody a deeper and truer conception of philosophy, and in order to give oneself account of why and how works of this kind and calibre manage to keep on being communicated, consumed, and authorized.

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